



CITY OF SAINT PAUL PARKS AND RECREATION VISION PLAN

Helping to Make Saint Paul the Most Livable City in America



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The Vision Plan is based on the work of Saint Paul staff and the Saint Paul Parks Comprehensive Plan Task Force.

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Hoisington Koegler Group Inc.



treeline

March 1st, 2008

Dear friend of Saint Paul Parks and Recreation:

Saint Paul's goal is to be the Most Livable City in America. Great cities across the globe have many things in common: economic vitality; safe streets; a unique and recognizable culture; and well-loved, well-utilized parks, trails, plazas and open spaces. Here in Saint Paul we are fortunate to have a more than 150 year legacy of civic-minded park planning and development upon which we can build. Como Park, Harriet Island, Rice Park, Phalen Park, 100+ miles of city trails and our 165 other park properties all contribute to the quality of our City, region, community, and neighborhoods.

This Parks and Recreation Vision Plan demonstrates the importance of parks and recreation to Saint Paul's quality of life. It will ensure that our park and recreation system continues to be one of the best in the nation, thereby helping us be the Most Livable City in America.

To make sure our park and recreation system remains at the highest quality, we need to keep it in top notch condition while responding both to the changing recreation needs of a dynamic city and to fiscal realities. This is a tall order. At times, we may need to make choices among competing needs. This Vision Plan is designed as a guide to decision making. It portrays a broad yet simple vision for the future and describes priority actions for reaching that vision. It focuses on how we will **create active lifestyles, vibrant places and a vital environment by responding creatively to change, innovating with every decision, and connecting the entire City.**

We are pleased with the role that parks and recreation currently play in making Saint Paul the Most Livable City in America; and we are inspired to do even better. We hope you share our enthusiasm and commitment to our parks and to our City.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Coleman".

Mayor Chris Coleman

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob Bierscheid".

Bob Bierscheid
Director of Parks and Recreation

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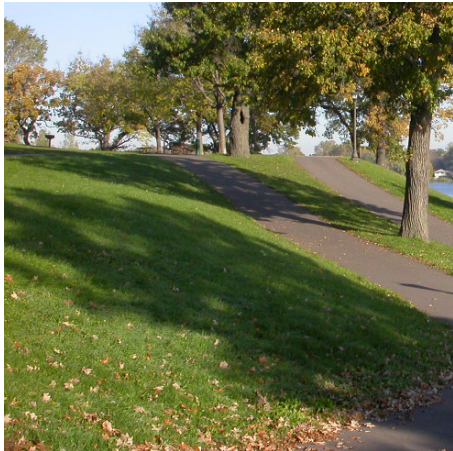
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SAINT PAUL PARKS AND RECREATION

the vision plan

SUMMARY

Saint Paul has one of the finest park and recreation systems in the nation -- and wants to ensure that it stays that way. There are, however, several challenges in keeping parks and recreation vital, accessible, safe, environmentally sound, and fiscally responsible. Aging park infrastructure, changing recreation and demographic needs, and finite funding, coupled with people's continued passion for and high use of parks, creates difficult scenarios that can be seen either as obstacles or as opportunities. This Vision Plan sees them as opportunities. It describes a positive future for parks and recreation in Saint Paul, and outlines specific activities that will lead to that future.

Saint Paul's strategic goal is to be "The Most Livable City in America." The primary intent of this Vision Plan is to make sure that parks and recreation helps the City attain that goal. The Vision Plan focuses on how to **create active lifestyles, vibrant places and a vital environment by responding creatively to change, innovating with every decision, and connecting the entire City.**

The vision plan has five sections. It includes an assessment of the current park system, an overview of recreation trends, a definition of six goals, a listing of initiatives and actions that will help attain those goals, and a suite of tools designed to help implement the Plan.



1: Where We Are – parks and recreation today

Saint Paul has an excellent park system, with a wide variety of neighborhood, community and regional parks. Ninety-six percent of residents are within ½ mile of a park. The City has many recreation centers, which are becoming increasingly difficult to operate cost effectively. Many park facilities and recreation centers are in need of renovation. While the City has an excellent network of sidewalks, it lacks a comprehensive system of off-street trails and on-street bikeways. There is a need for greater economic, social and environmental sustainability in the park system.



2: How We See Things Changing – trends

The City is becoming more diverse and recreation demand is expanding. Fiscal challenges require creative solutions, prioritization of actions and investments, and more partnerships. Due to increased obesity and other health concerns, people are recognizing the need to lead more active lives. Changing climate is affecting how winter activities are provided and has raised interest in energy efficiency and environmental sustainability. Many people prefer quality facilities over a higher quantity of poorer facilities. Residents' top priorities for improvements are walking and biking trails, neighborhood parks and park restrooms.



3: Where We Are Going – the vision

Saint Paul's strategic goal is to be the Most Livable City in America. The Parks and Recreation Department's role in livability revolves around health, community character and the environment. Six goals were developed that together represent the Department Vision and Mission:

Facilitating the creation of **active lifestyles, vibrant places** and a **vital environment**, through parks and recreation that **respond creatively to change, innovate with every decision** and **connect the entire City**.



4: How We Will Get There – initiatives

The Vision Plan includes 38 initiatives designed to achieve the six goals. These initiatives are not the Park and Recreation Department's only possible actions, but they are priorities in helping Saint Paul be the Most Livable City in America.



Active lifestyles

Saint Paul Parks and Recreation will establish its place as Saint Paul's champion of health and wellness.



Vibrant places

Saint Paul Parks and Recreation will envision and create public spaces that enliven the districts around them.



A vital environment

Saint Paul Parks and Recreation will exemplify environmental leadership through design maintenance and operations.



Respond creatively to change

Saint Paul Parks and Recreation will refine park facilities to accommodate new demands.



Innovate with every decision

Saint Paul Parks and Recreation will invest in quality over quantity and always make it sustainable.

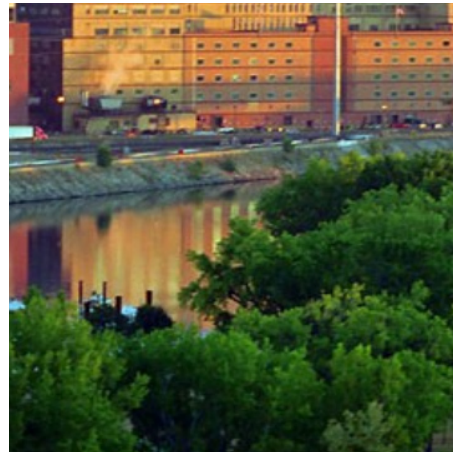
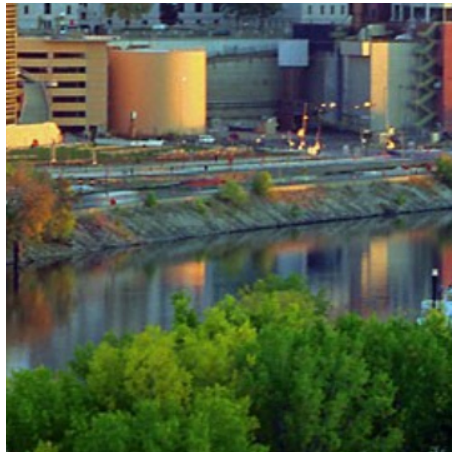


Connect the entire City

Saint Paul Parks and Recreation will work toward building a system not a collection.

5: Using the Vision Plan – tool kit

The Vision Plan includes several tools designed to help achieve the plan goals, implement the initiatives, and make the parks system more sustainable. They include a Decision Principles Checklist, Activity Delivery Guidelines, Park Classifications, Recreation Facility Standards, and a Users Guide. The tools help guide decision making and set minimum standards for parks and recreation facilities.



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INTRODUCTION

Saint Paul's strategic vision is to be the Most Livable City in America. Accomplishing this goal will take the entire city – officials, staff at all departments, and residents. Given the large part that parks, trails, open spaces, and recreation play in creating a livable community, it is important that the Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Department, in particular, define a strategy and prioritize actions to contribute to that vision.

The Parks and Recreation Vision Plan establishes goals, priority initiatives, actions, and tools to help the city, residents and partner organizations reach a healthier future. It is based on the Parks chapter of the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan and prioritizes actions to implement the Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies. The Vision Plan is designed to be an illustrative guide to the vision for Parks and Recreation, as well as a “how to” manual for achieving that vision. The manual has initiatives for each of the six Comprehensive Plan goals, and includes tools to help guide decision making, investment, and actions. The Vision Plan does not include all possible department actions or Comprehensive Plan policies. Rather, it focuses on the priority initiatives needed to achieve the vision and is designed to communicate that vision and those initiatives to a broad audience.

PROCESS

The Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Vision Plan is based on previous department and city planning work, an evaluation of the current park system, a look at future trends and influences, and comparisons to similar cities. It builds on the work of the Comprehensive Plan Parks Task Force, draws from the City of Saint Paul's Strategic Plan, and uses the 2007 Community Attitude and Interest Survey results. Preparation of the Vision Plan was guided by a city staff planning team, and utilized the park planning and communications expertise of Hoisington Koegler Group and Treeline.

The planning process also conceived of the idea of “PARKCARDS.” These unique communication tools will be used to offer consistent, detailed information – in a readable, entertaining format – to the public, other city departments, and parks staff. They will be one-page summaries of the Vision Plan itself, department decision principles, and new or renovated facilities or programs. Three PARKCARDS were created as part of the vision process, with the idea that new ones could be made by the department, as needed, following the establish template.

*“Failure is not reaching your goal,
but in having no goal to reach.” -
Benjamin Mays*





1. WHERE WE ARE

parks and recreation today

The Mississippi River. Como Park. The Winter Carnival. Mears Park. Summit Avenue. These places and events evoke the soul of Saint Paul - and they are all part of the Saint Paul Parks and Recreation system.

Parks are defining features for cities, are treasured by their residents, and contribute to the quality of life. A strong park system, therefore, almost always indicates a vibrant, healthy and livable city. And Saint Paul has one of the strongest.

The City of Saint Paul covers 56 square miles along 17 miles of the upper Mississippi River. The City is rich in neighborhood character, which can be seen both in its historic downtown buildings and its tree-lined residential streets. The City is Minnesota's capital, and, as such, is in the unique position of not only belonging to its own residents, but serving as the state's historical and cultural heart. It has been called a "city of neighborhoods:" its 287,000 people living in a network of urban villages, each with its own unique character. Parks and recreation has historically been - and will continue to be - essential in defining the character of those 'villages' and weaving them together.

Cities constantly evolve, and Saint Paul is no different. The demographic make-up of the city has changed over the last 20 years to become significantly more ethnically diverse, and this is likely to continue. The city is also growing. Over the next 25 years the population is expected to increase by 15%. While this

is not a huge influx, it will increase demand for city services of all kinds, including parks and recreation.

Saint Paul is changing physically as well. Redevelopment opportunities such as the Central Corridor, the Ford Plant Site, the Payne-Maryland Vision Framework, and the Shepard-Davern area will provide opportunities for new connections to natural resources, new parks, and increased connectivity city-wide. The evolving city will bring new challenges and new opportunities for parks and recreation.

The Changing City

1990 to 2006 has been a time of demographic change for the City of Saint Paul. While there was a slight increase in the number of people, from 272,235 in 1990 to 286,620 in 2006, the composition of the City population has changed significantly.

- Saint Paul is more racially and ethnically diverse. In 1990 the City population was 17.7% non-white. In 2006, the non-white population is approximately 32%. The proportion of foreign born residents has increased
- The average household size has gotten smaller, down to an estimated 2.4 persons per household in 2006.
- The total number of children has declined and approximately one fourth of the households (26%) have children under the age of 18.
- One out of ten people are 65 years or older.
- Most new housing added in the last ten years has been multi-family dwellings near the river or in Downtown.

Saint Paul is forecast to grow. According to the Met Council, Saint Paul's population will grow to 331,000 by 2030 or an increase of 15% since 2006. This forecast assumes the addition of approximately 18,500 new households between 2006 and 2030.

Data sources: 1990 decennial census, 2000 decennial census, 2006 American Community Survey and the Metropolitan Council.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Parks are the places people talk about of when they describe their neighborhood, their community, and their city. In addition to being a source of civic identity and pride, parks and recreation are essential to the physical, economic, environmental, and social health of cities and the people who live in them.



A healthy park system equals healthy residents. Simply put, people who engage in regular physical activity are healthier. When people have access to parks, trails, and recreation, they exercise more. In addition, increased exposure to natural areas has been linked to improved physical and psychological health.

Parks and open space increase property values. Numerous studies show links between proximity to parks and open spaces and increased residential property values. Parks and open space can also positively affect commercial property and can be a catalyst for redevelopment.

Parks contribute to beauty. Parkways, tree lined streets, gardens, lush landscaped areas, views to rivers and lakes, stately woods, public art. These are all things that make a city a beautiful place to live, work, play, and shop. They all contribute to a city's livability and vitality.

Parks and recreation are essential to the physical, economic, environmental, and social health of cities and the people who live in them.

Parks improve tourism. Across the country new downtown urban parks are attracting visitors from near and far. In Chicago, Millennium Park brings visitors from all over the world. In Saint Paul, the Como Park, Zoo, and Conservatory and large annual festivals, such as the Winter Carnival, draw visitors from across the state and beyond.

Parks and open space provide environmental benefits. Trees and vegetation found in parks improve air and water quality. Parks also play a role in managing stormwater runoff and protecting natural areas.

Parks preserve natural and cultural heritage. Significant natural features, such as the Mississippi River Corridor and Lake Phalen, and historical and cultural sites, like Como, Crosby Farm Park, Lilydale, and Indian Mounds, are preserved as parkland for today's residents, as well as for future generations.

Parks have important social benefits. Parks and recreation centers are often the focal points of neighborhoods. They are places for neighborhood activities and celebrations and provide a sense of community.

Parks are FUN. Parks are often cited as people's favorite places. They are where people go to have fun and relax. A balanced park system has something for everyone. In Saint Paul, parks are where you take your kids to hang upside down on the monkey bars, where you play a game of soccer, where you take your dog to run, where you garden with your neighbors, where you take a quiet walk through the woods.

CASE STUDY

Blooming Saint Paul

Blooming Saint Paul began in 2002 as an effort to revitalize Saint Paul's urban environment through use of lush and colorful plantings. In its first year, a three block long median in Kellogg Boulevard was transformed from a plain turf area into a 15, 600 square foot beautiful garden. In addition, the Courthouse grounds were heavily planted using 27 newly designed and constructed window boxes. Large raised beds and four large planting urns were also purchased and planted with seasonal plantings. The impact of enhancing the urban environment has continued to spread throughout Saint Paul. Commercial corridors and businesses are beginning to incorporate

Blooming Saint Paul themes into the overall landscape. The City currently plants 295 garden beds, 150 planters and 500 hanging baskets throughout downtown Saint Paul. Private businesses and neighborhood organizations are also working with the City of Saint Paul to fund the design, implementation, and maintenance of the landscape enhancements. These enhancements are being incorporated into Saint Paul's urban environment creating an attractive, safe and healthy city where people choose to live, work and play.

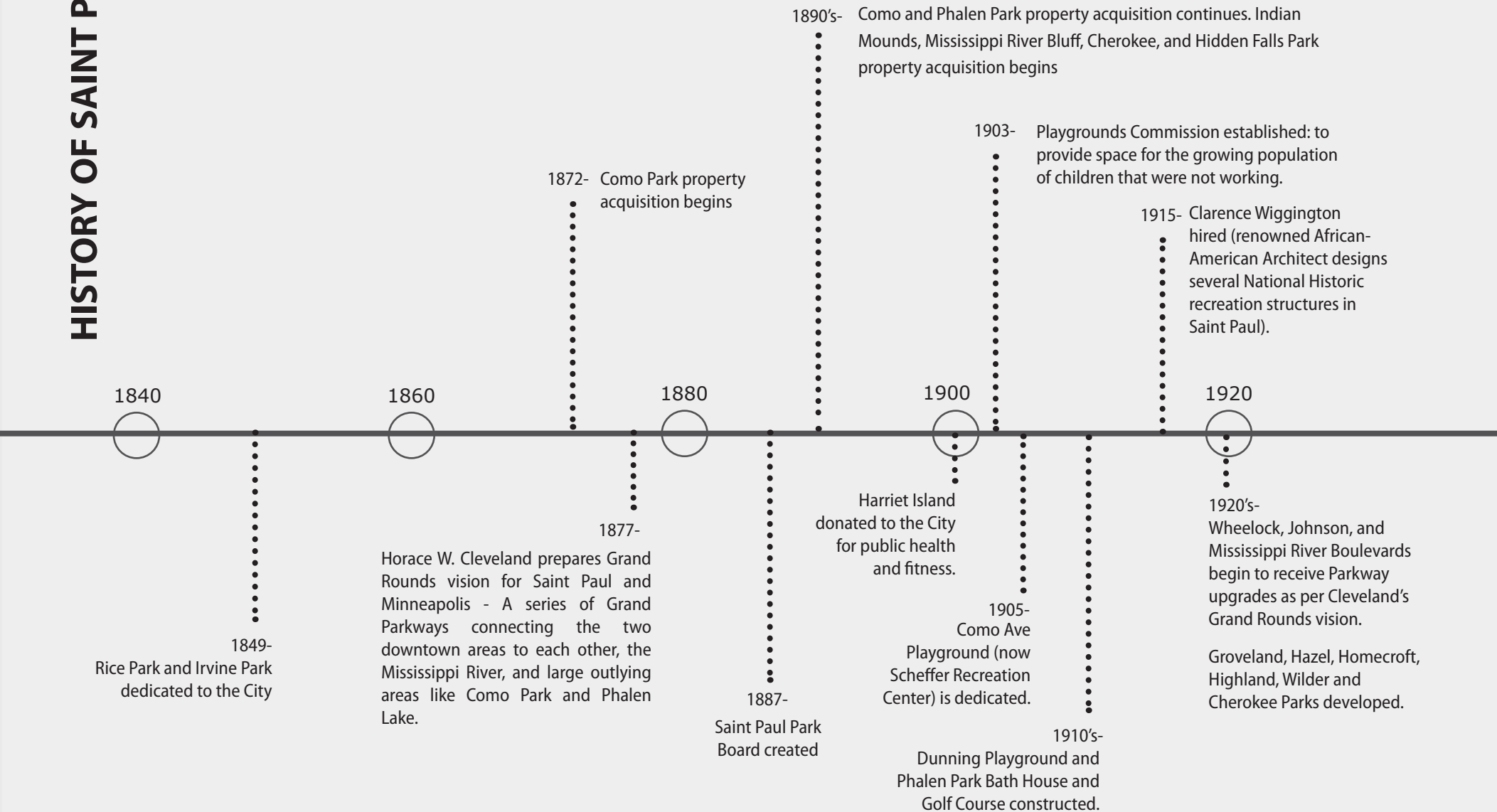


HISTORY OF SAINT PAUL PARKS

1840'S-1880'S
THE FORMATIVE YEARS

1890'S-1910'S
THE EXPANSION YEARS
AND CIVIC SPIRIT

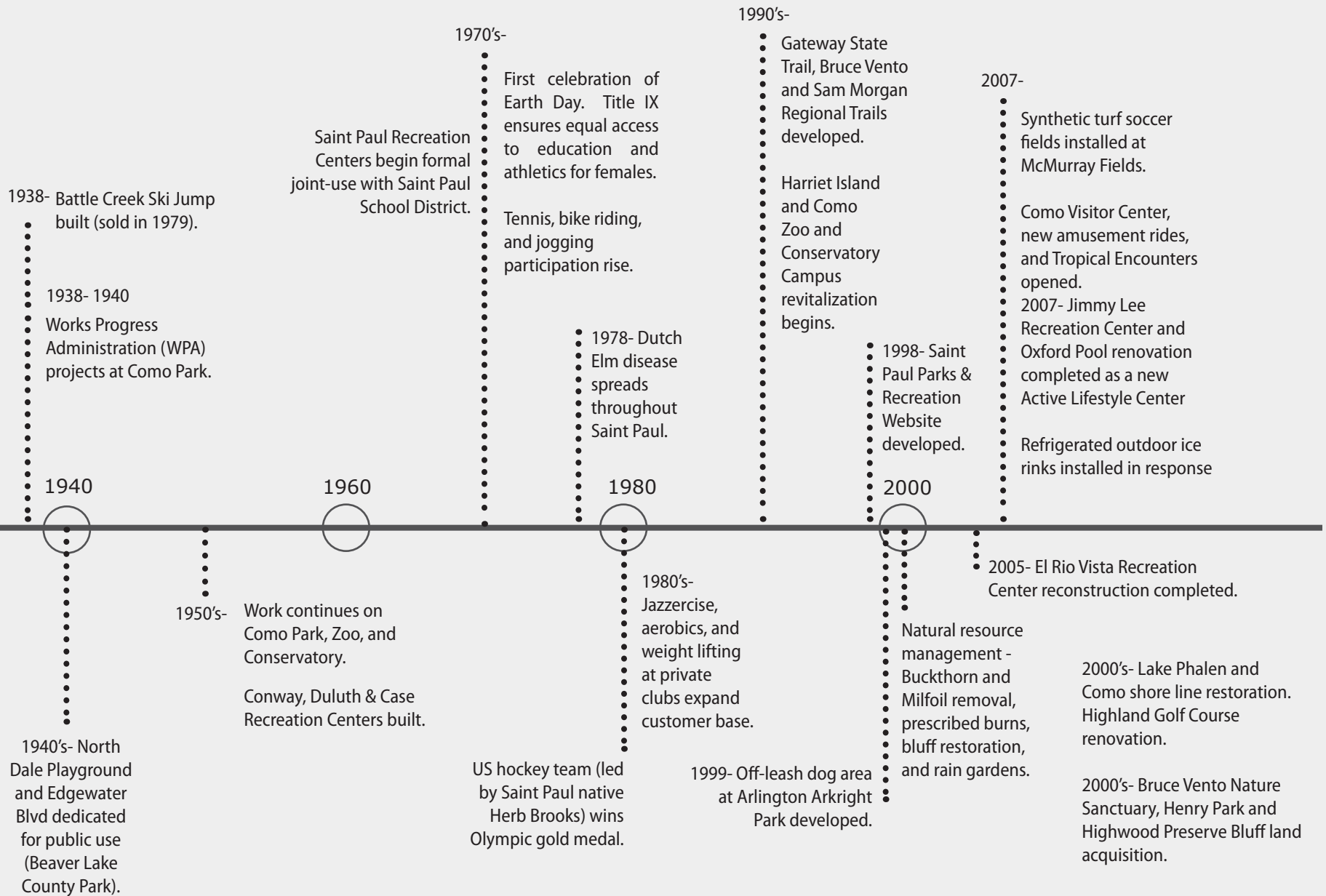
1920'S-1930'S
THE DEPRESSION
AND WAR YEARS



1940'S-1960'S
THE BABY BOOM YEARS
AND ORGANIZED SPORTS

1970'S-1980'S
THE PERSONAL
FITNESS YEARS

1990'S-2007
THE REDEVELOPMENT
YEARS



Parks and Recreation System

Figure 1.1



THE EXISTING PARKS AND RECREATION SYSTEM

Today, over 20% of Saint Paul's land area is comprised of parks and natural areas. Roughly half of this (11%) is owned and maintained by the city's Parks and Recreation Department; the remainder is made up of County, State, and Federal parkland. The city's park system has five main physical components: parks, recreation centers, trails, parkways, and the urban forest. The city owns 170 park properties; operates 33 recreation centers; offers four golf courses; partners in the operation of eight recreation facilities; and owns and maintains 108 miles of off-street trails, 70 miles of on-street bikeways, 24 miles of natural surface trails, and 40 miles of parkways (see Figure 1.1 Existing Parks and Recreation System). The park system includes a wide range of facilities for diverse activities, including:

- baseball fields
- softball fields
- soccer fields
- football fields
- basketball courts
- tennis courts
- playgrounds
- ice hockey rinks
- general ice skating rinks
- a beach
- a boat launch
- marinas
- hiking and walking trails
- biking trails and lanes
- in-line skating trails
- picnicking grounds
- gardens
- skateboarding parks
- a zoo and conservatory
- aquatics facilities
- indoor gyms
- meeting and recreation space
- golf and disc golf courses
- Midway Stadium

Today, over 20% of Saint Paul's land area is comprised of parks and natural areas.

Park and recreation highlights

- Como Regional Park, which draws visitors from all over the state, has an outdoor pool, winter sports programs, a zoo, a conservatory, Japanese gardens, a lake with band pavilion, and extensive picnic grounds.
- Regional and community parks - Battle Creek Regional Park, Crosby Regional Park, Phalen Regional Park, Hidden Falls Regional Park, and Highland Park - provide community-wide access to natural areas, picnicking grounds, swimming areas, and golf courses.
- East Mississippi Boulevard consists of a parkway, scenic overlooks, and trails on the bluffs above the river.
- Riverfront and downtown parks (including Harriet Island Regional Park, Mears Park, and Rice Park) attract visitors daily from throughout the region as well as for some of the most loved festivals and events in the Upper Midwest.
- Thirty-three recreation centers have educated, entertained, and challenged generations of neighborhood children and adults.
- Extensive recreational programs provide opportunities for all residents to hone their sporting skills or just toss a ball around.
- A strong network of neighborhood parks contributes to community character and offers close-to-home green space.
- Regional trails such as the Gateway State Trail, Bruce Vento Trail, and the Sam Morgan Trail link neighborhoods to longer-distance bike rides or walks.
- Special events such as The Winter Carnival and The Taste of Minnesota bring thousands into the parks for fun, socializing, and food.

Parks

Saint Paul's 170 parks provide for a wide range of recreational activities. They range in character from large regional parks that attract visitors from across the metropolitan area to secluded parks that are well-known only to nearby residents. Existing parks are classified by their use and function within the park-system in Table 1.1.

Recreation

The Saint Paul parks system offers extensive recreation programming through its 33 recreation centers and the mobile recreation unit. Programs are provided for all ages, from infants to seniors. Programs include: traditional and non-traditional sports, fitness, self defense, dance, arts and crafts, nature study, cooking, computer training, pre-school, and before and after school childcare. In addition, partner organizations offer specialized recreation in eight city-owned facilities.

Special Events

The Parks and Recreation Department facilitates special events, many of which take place in city parks. The Winter Carnival and The Taste of Minnesota are two well known events, but countless community and neighborhood celebrations are held throughout the year. By providing these events the department plays a strong role in tourism and building community identity.

Trails, Sidewalks, and Bikeways

Linear recreation facilities provide for non-motorized transportation and recreation within the City. Sidewalks host pedestrian traffic while off-street trails provide for pedestrian, bicycle, and in-line skating use. On-street bikeways (mostly bike lanes) are used primarily by bicyclists and are useful in parallel with sidewalks to allow for safe movement of both pedestrians and cyclists of all skill levels. Because Saint Paul developed

prior to the popularity of bike trails, trail development is currently, for the most part, limited to regional trails. The city's sidewalk system is one of its greatest assets. Sidewalks can be found along most streets and provide an excellent network for pedestrian movement from neighborhoods to schools, parks, commercial shopping districts, and other destinations.

Parkways and the Saint Paul Grand Rounds

The Saint Paul Grand Rounds was conceived by H.W.S. Cleveland over 100 years ago as an emerald necklace of parkways that would encircle the City. In the early 1900s Johnson, Midway, and Wheelock Parkway were completed, linking Como, Phalen, and Indian Mounds Parks. Since that time, the Mississippi River Boulevard has been completed, but most of the Grand Rounds remains unfinished. Recently, the Saint Paul Grand Round Master Plan outlined a 29-mile recreational greenway loop for driving, bicycling, walking and in-line skating. The plan includes a development concept for the route; suggests improvements for each segment; design guidelines, preliminary costs, and phasing; and identifies interpretive themes and sites.

Most of the historic and re-envisioned Grand Rounds follows existing parkways, of which Saint Paul has approximately 40 miles. While parkways are often thought of as corridors dedicated to both recreation and the movement of vehicles, many of Saint Paul's parkways are primarily devoted to the movement of vehicles with limited provisions for recreation. Parkway within the system that have recreational amenities include Mississippi River Boulevard, which is flanked by off-street trails and park land, and Mounds Boulevard, which is paralleled by off-street trails. Wheelock Parkway, which connects Como and Phalen Parks, is a designated bike route. Summit Avenue has bike lanes in both directions. Como Avenue, from Como Park to Jackson Street has a combination of share-the-road signage and bike lanes.

-170 Parks

-33 Recreation Centers

-Mobile Recreation

-40 Miles of Parkway

Non-city Park and Recreation Amenities

In addition to City owned park land, residents of Saint Paul are fortunate to have additional park, trail, and recreational amenities not specifically managed by the city.

- Battle Creek Regional Park –Ramsey County
- Seven indoor ice arenas –Ramsey County
- Pig's Eye Lake Regional Park –Ramsey County and City
- State Capitol and Capital Grounds – State of Minnesota
- Gateway State Trail – Minnesota DNR
- Beaver Lake Park –Ramsey County
- Fort Snelling State Park – State of Minnesota
- Schools, libraries, and museums
- A wide variety of private recreation and fitness providers
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resource Headquarters and fish hatchery
- Mississippi National River & Recreation Area - National Park Service (MN RRA)

Table 1.1 Existing Park Classifications and Acreages

Park Classification	Description	Existing Number	Acres
Mini Park	Typically less than two acres and providing opportunities for passive recreation close to home. Facilities may include: overlooks, open lawns, tot lots, tennis courts, basketball courts, gardens, and open space.	37	33
Neighborhood Park	Typically 2-15 acres and developed primarily for active recreation such as field games, court games, playground play, and skating.	52	300
Recreation Center	Provides indoor recreation and meeting room space.	33	NA
Passive Park	Open or natural areas with limited recreational development, primarily devoted to picnicking or strolling. May include paths, mature trees, nature areas, gardens, and lawn areas.	26	268
Community Park	15 or more acres that contain facilities that serve the entire community. May include large picnic grounds, programmed sport complexes, golf course, and aquatics facilities.	6	353
Special Use Park	Single-use areas such as sports stadiums. Midway Stadium is the only facility in this category	1	13
Urban Park	Parks that provide for gathering space within the downtown area offering a primary social, rather than recreational, experience. May include plazas, band shells, and lawn areas	11	20
Regional Park	Parks that are designated part of the Metropolitan Regional Park System. Uses vary widely, but focus is on outdoor and natural resource-based recreation and learning. Como, Phalen, Hidden Falls-Crosby Farm, Lilydale-Harriet Island, Mississippi Gorge, Battle Creek –Indian Mounds are all regional parks within the City of Saint Paul	10	2,394
Other Property	Unprogrammed open space areas that have little recreational value, such as traffic circles and medians. Maintenance facilities are also included in this category.	26	9
Land Total			3,392
Water	Lakes, streams, ponds, rivers and wetlands		732
Total			4,124

How does Saint Paul's park system measure-up?

Benchmarking Saint Paul's Park System against nine similar metropolitan areas helps assess how well the city serves its residents compared to other cities. The comparison is useful in identifying significant deficiencies or excesses, but results must be considered in light of other local factors. Every city is unique, resulting in unique park systems established by historic development patterns, climate, local recreation trends, natural resources, and a host of other

factors. How communities measure and define park system elements also affects the comparison. For example, one city may include all bike lanes when measuring miles of trails while another may only count off-street pathways. The table below is a sampling of the comparison. Overall, Saint Paul compares very favorably to the other cities, with significantly more parkland than the average city.

Table 1.2 Benchmark Comparisons

City Name	St. Paul, MN	Mpls, MN	Portland, OR	Pittsburgh, PA	Madison, WI	Kansas City, MO	Cincinnati, OH	Toledo, OH	St. Louis, MO	Hamilton, Ontario	Peer Cities Average	Comparison
City area in square miles	56	55	134	58	80	311	80	84	62	431		
Total City population	280,000	372,811	533,427	316,718	223,280	442,000	444,965	301,285	352,572	504,559		
PARKS & OPEN SPACE												
Park acreage held by City park agency	4,123	5,359	10,613	2,800	6,600	11,799	1,624	2,206	3,001	2,662		
City parkland acreage per 1000 population	14.73	14.37	19.90	8.84	29.56	26.69	3.65	7.32	8.51	5.28	13.88	St. Paul has slightly more City parkland than average per 1,000 residents.
Park acres in City (City and Other Agencies)	7,744	5,359	13,246	2,838	6,600	17,189	7,000	0	3,381	0		
City and other agency parkland per 1000 population	27.6	14.37	24.8	9	29.56	38.6	20.4	7.3	9.6	5.28	18.65	St. Paul has more total parkland than average per 1000 residents (City, Regional, State, Fed.)
Total all parkland as percentage of City area	21.5%	15.3%	15.1%	7.7%	12.9%	8.6%	13.6%	4.3%	8.5%	1.0%	12%	St. Paul has a high percentage of parkland per total city area
Total Number of Park Units	169	182	286	172	260	221	364	144	107	310		
Park Units per 10,000 Residents	6.03	4.90	5.40	5.40	11.60	5.00	11.00	4.80	3.00	6.14	6	St. Paul is has an average number of parks per 10,000 residents
Facilities												
Miles of Bikeways/Greenways	108	75	105	35	150	22	15	N/A	15	85		
Number of Recreation Centers	33	49	18	24	1	11	29	4	11	19		
Number of Recreation Centers per 20,000 Residents	2.36	2.6	0.7	1.5	0.09	0.5	1.8	0.3	0.6		1	St. Paul has a higher number of recreation centers than average per 20,000 residents.
Number of SkateBoard Parks	2	6	1	3	N/A	2	0	1.0	0	2		
Number of Skate Board Parks per 100,000 Residents	0.7	1.6	0.2	0.9	N/A	0.4	0	0.3	0	0.4	0.5	St. Paul has an average number of skateboard parks, however this data may not be accurate as many cities are building parks to meet the trend.
Number of skating rinks	35	31	1	1	8	1	3	N/A	4	N/A		
Number of skating rinks/10,000 Residents	0.50	0.83	0.02	0.03	0.22	0.02	0.07	N/A	0.11	N/A	0.2	St. Paul has a greater than average number of skating rinks.
Number of Ball Diamonds (Baseball and Softball) per 10,000 Residents	5.5	5.3	0.4	4	N/A	3.5	4.5	2.9	3.2	N/A	3.7	St. Paul has more ballfields fields per 10,000 residents than average.

SYSTEM EVALUATION

Saint Paul's Park and Recreation system was evaluated in three ways: by benchmarking the system to other comparable metropolitan areas in the United States and Canada (See Table 1.1, Benchmark Comparisons), through an analysis of the distribution and quality of key park resources, and by utilizing information from the people who know the park system best: the staff of the Parks and Recreation Department. It is clear that Saint Paul has an excellent and comprehensive park and recreation system, but it also faces significant challenges.

It is clear that Saint Paul has an excellent and comprehensive park and recreation system, but it also faces significant challenges.

System Strengths

- **An extensive amount of park land** – Saint Paul has more park land per capita and a higher percentage of land area devoted to parks than in most cities
- **Excellent park coverage** - 96% of residents are within ½ mile of a park (See Figure 4.2)
- **A wide range of city facilities and park types/sizes** - Most activities are provided for within the city system, which is further supplemented by schools and other recreation providers
- **Many cultural and recreation events** – The city facilitates and provides space for numerous festivals and events. This leads to increases in tourism and economic development.
- **Large number of recreation centers** – The city has many more recreation centers per capita than most cities.
- **Unique delivery of services** – Mobile recreation brings recreation programs to neighborhoods, while in-house park design provides quality park amenities.

System Needs

- **Revitalization.** While Saint Paul compares favorably to other cities in the quantity of park and recreation facilities it provides, there is a large range in the quality and condition of facilities across the system. This includes recreation centers, neighborhood parks, and specific elements such as ice rinks and sports fields. When trying to be all things to all people at all times, the quality of the experience can decline and the cost can go up. There is significant need for park and recreation infrastructure improvements in Saint Paul.
- **The need for economic sustainability.** The costs of maintaining the large quantity of recreation centers and park facilities within the system may outweigh the

benefits. There is an opportunity to enhance services, efficiency, and economic sustainability through a focus on quality rather than quantity.

- **Enhanced connectivity and linear recreation.** Trails, parkways, greenways, bikeways, and improved transit can be used to link regional parks, natural features, and other significant destinations, as well as acting as recreational amenities themselves. Linear recreation is becoming more necessary in order to improve access to recreational assets. (See Figure 4.7, Existing and Recommended Trail Corridors).
- **Parks and trails as catalysts for investment.** There are opportunities for strategic additions, changes, and improvement of parks, trails, and recreation assets to stimulate/compliment public and private investment.
- **Enhanced coordination between the city, the schools, and other providers.** People care about the quality of the experience, not who owns the park. There are opportunities to enhance public access, quality and efficiency in public and private spaces to deliver the best possible service.
- **Build advocacy through communications.** There is a need for increased awareness of park and recreation opportunities and benefits. This can be accomplished through consistent department communications, identity, and “brand.”

Quality vs. Quantity: Level of Service provided by Existing Neighborhood Parks and Recreation Centers

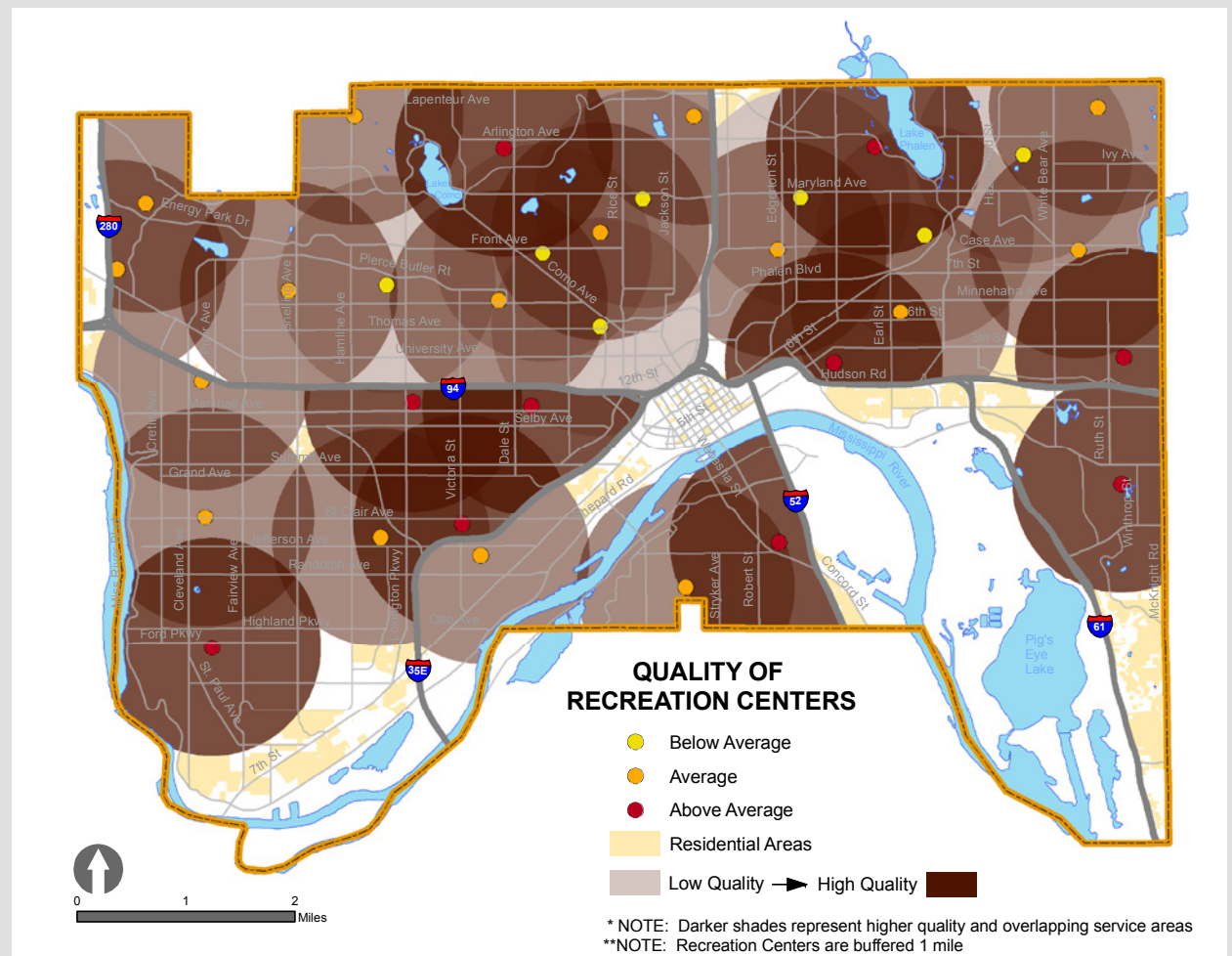
Level of service analysis for parks and recreation typically involves assessment based on quantity and distribution of facilities, but often ignores the quality of facilities. This type of analysis works well for growing communities, where facilities are new and, typically, high quality. But it only tells part of the story for an older community like Saint Paul, with a wide variation in the quality of facilities. Therefore, to paint a more accurate picture of the level of service being provided to Saint Paul residents, a quality component has been added to the level of service analysis.

- *light brown indicates areas with lower quality service*
- *darker brown depicts areas with the highest level of service*

In the map below, Quality of Recreation Centers, the colored dots depict the distribution and quality of recreation centers city-wide. Recreation centers were assessed based on five indicators: size of the building, number of amenities, number of gyms, size of gyms, and the building condition. They were then given an overall quality ranking. The shaded circles show the quality of recreation centers with a one mile service radius free of major barriers, such as the Mississippi River or interstate highways. A gradient color is used: light brown indicates areas with lower quality service and darker brown depicts areas with the highest level of service. Where service

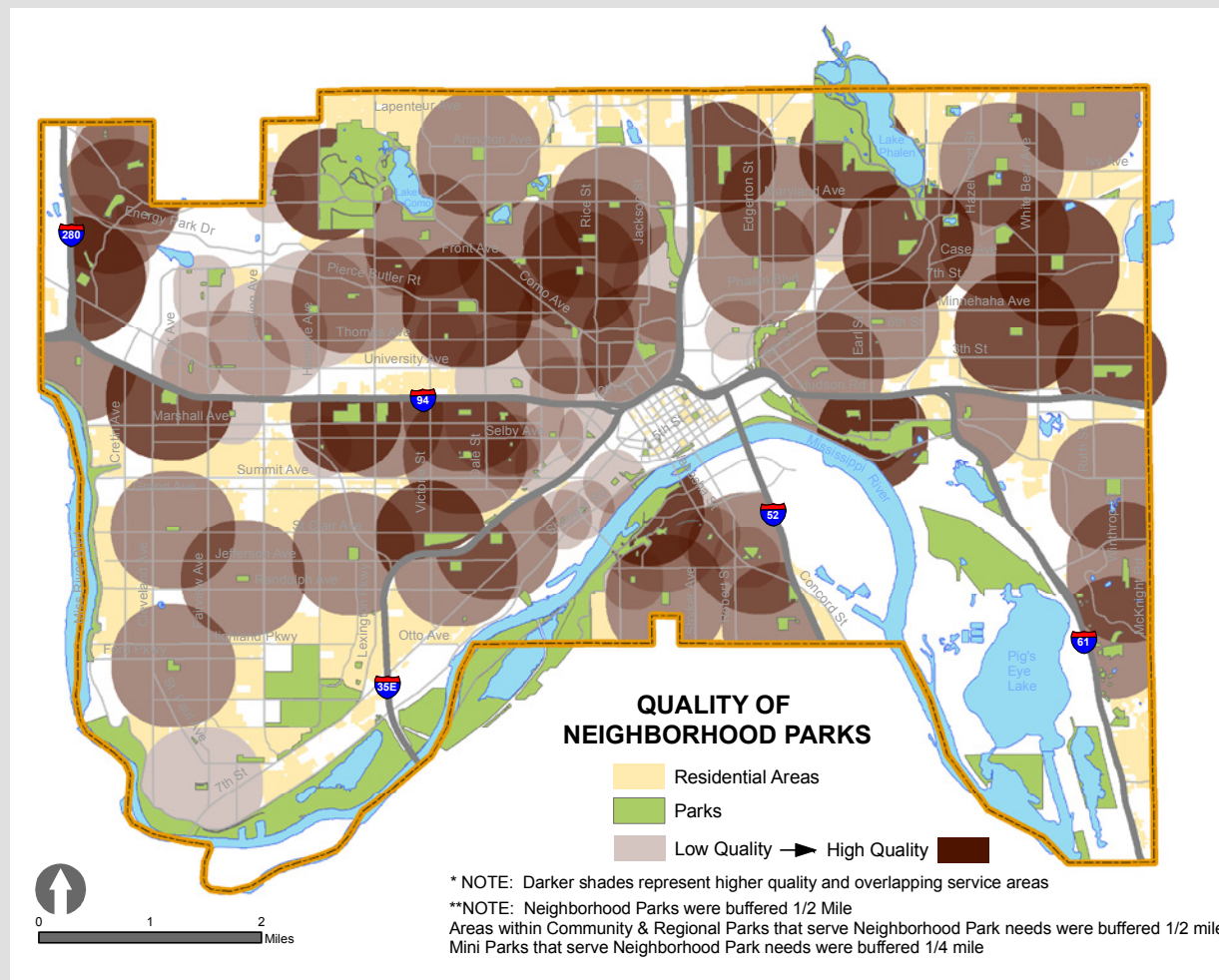
areas overlap, a darker shade is displayed, since residents in these areas have a choice of nearby recreation centers, and therefore, a higher level of service. The peach color indicates residential areas with gaps in service.

The map on page 23, Quality of Neighborhood Parks, depicts how well resident's neighborhood recreation needs are being met today. Neighborhood recreation typically takes place in neighborhood parks, but can occur in mini and regional parks as well. To determine overall quality, neighborhood parks were assessed based on five factors: park size, number



of amenities, quality of amenities, and diversity of amenities. Quality for neighborhood parks is shown at a half mile service radius free of interstate highways and the Mississippi River, which act as major barriers to travel. Mini park quality was assessed based on park size and number of amenities. Since these parks are small, less than two acres, they serve a smaller population than neighborhood parks and are depicted with a quarter mile service area. Areas of regional parks that fulfill a neighborhood's recreation needs are also included in the analysis. For regional parks, a half mile service radius with a quality rating is shown from the area of the park that acts as

a neighborhood park. Quality is depicted as gradient color: light brown indicates areas with lower quality service and darker brown depicts the highest level of service. Where service areas overlap, a darker shade is displayed, indicating that residents in these areas have a higher level of service because they have a choice of nearby parks and therefore a higher level of service. The peach color indicates residential areas with gaps in neighborhood park service.



- a darker shade is displayed in areas of overlap
- peach color indicates residential areas with gaps in service

COMMUNITY NEEDS

Community park and recreation needs for the future were identified as part of the city's 2030 Comprehensive Planning process. The City used two methods to determine these needs: it assembled a Parks and Recreation Task Force that met monthly throughout 2007 to discuss and identify key issues for inclusion in the 2030 Comprehensive Plan, and it conducted a community-wide survey.

Parks Comprehensive Plan Task Force

The Parks Comprehensive Plan Task Force (in their work as policy advisors for the update of the Parks Chapter of the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan) heard from stakeholders and experts on a wide range of topics pertaining to parks and recreation. During this process they defined key trends (listed below) and developed strategies, objectives, policies and implementation actions. The work of the Task Force was used to inform the key messages and initiatives of this Vision Plan and the content of the Parks Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan.

Key Trends

- **Increasing demand.** With Saint Paul's population growing in absolute numbers as well as in diversity, the demands being placed on the parks and recreation system have increased and will continue to grow. With more voices calling for additional facilities and programming as well as new kinds of park and recreation opportunities to meet emerging trends, the Parks and Recreation Division will be challenged to continue to provide high-quality facilities and programming that meet the needs of the community and enhance neighborhood quality of life.
- **Decreasing resources.** Financial and land resources to support, enlarge, diversify, and maintain the parks system are dwindling. Funding to support construction, operations, and maintenance has been woefully inadequate for years and will continue to be a major challenge in the future as the City struggles with an increasingly limited budget. Land for new parks and recreation facilities is a scarce resource in Saint Paul, and in some neighborhoods it is simply nonexistent.
- **Increased focus on sustainability.** From natural stormwater management to protection and restoration of native habitats, the link between open space and the city's precious natural resources will become more important in defining Saint Paul's quality of life.

But a commitment to sustainability does not end with the natural environment – it also requires making choices that enhance social equity and that are fiscally appropriate for the long term. Since the City does not have the financial resources to meet all of the diverse community needs by simply building more facilities and providing more services, the Parks and Recreation Division will have to find creative ways to deliver an efficient and equitable system. Sustainable choices will need to be based on an understanding of parks and recreation as a total, citywide system rather than as a collection of components located in distinct neighborhood. Discipline and strategic thinking are crucial components of a parks system that will be sustainable in the long range.

- **Increased focus on active, healthy lifestyles.** Parks and recreation facilities and programming are increasingly seen as a fundamental part of a more active, healthy lifestyle; survey respondents cite improved health and fitness as the top benefit of Saint Paul Parks and Recreation. This broadening of expectations will impact how parks facilities are designed and where they are located, but it also creates an opportunity for parks to serve as the authoritative voice and information source for Saint Paul citizens who want to increase their physical activity level and live more healthy lives.

Community Survey

In the Fall of 2007 the City of Saint Paul conducted a community attitude and interest survey to establish priorities for the future improvement of parks and recreation facilities, programs, and services. The survey was designed to obtain statistically valid results from households throughout the City of Saint Paul. The survey was administered by an outside consultant via a combination of mail and phone.

Key Findings Include:

- The top three benefits of Parks and Recreation are improved health and fitness (95%); making Saint Paul a more desirable place to live (93%); and preserving open space and the environment (89%). (By % strongly agreeing or agreeing)
- The most visited park and recreation facilities are the Como Campus (85%), Walking and Biking Trails (76%), and Neighborhood Parks (71%).
- Respondents are generally satisfied with the condition of most park and recreation facilities but their top priorities for improvements include walking and biking trails, neighborhood parks, and park restrooms.
- About one-fourth (27%) of responding households participated in recreation programs in the last year. Of those households who participated, over two thirds (67%) have participated in more than one program. The majority of people (85%) who have participated rated the quality of the program as excellent or good.
- The three programs most participated in are: adult fitness and wellness programs, nature programs, and City-wide special events. Respondents also said the City had the most need for these three.
- The most frequently mentioned ways that respondents learn about City of Saint Paul Division of Parks and Recreation facilities and activities are from friends and neighbors (54%); the Community Education Catalog (52%); and newspaper articles (43%).

- Unmet park and recreation needs include: off leash dog parks, indoor swimming pools, a skateboard park, indoor fitness programs and facilities, indoor walking/running track, and a nature center with natural habitats.
- People were asked about their willingness to support actions to improve the parks and recreation as well as their willingness to fund those actions with tax dollars. The actions with the most support are:

1. using greenways along the river to develop trails
2. developing connected walking/biking trails
3. purchasing land to preserve open space
4. fixing-up buildings and facilities
5. Upgrading existing neighborhood recreation centers

(ranking in willingness to support with tax dollars)

OTHER RESOURCES The Value of Parks

Several researchers, including Dr. John Crompton in his book *The Proximate Principle*, have documented the positive effect parks have upon property values. Crompton shows that passive parks, greenway corridors, open space amenities, golf courses, and the like increase the value of property located within $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ mile of the park by 5% to over 10%. One only has to look at the value of property and neighborhoods near the City parkways, Mississippi River, Como Park, etc. to see that effect in Saint Paul. When assessing the cost/benefit of park and open space investments we need to recognize the many values of parks beyond recreation (social, environmental, health, visual, and economic).





2. HOW WE SEE THINGS CHANGING *trends*

The City, recreation, and our environment are changing and dynamic. It is important to anticipate trends and plan for the future. The following are key trends that we see influencing parks and recreation in Saint Paul.

RECREATION EVOLVES

Recreation is constantly evolving. New technologies, trends, cultures, and activities bring changing facility and program needs. Parks and Recreation must keep pace with these changing needs. By building flexibility into park and recreation facilities, the city will be able to adapt to new needs without expensive changes.

Recreation participation is influenced by changing demographics, the popularity of sports or activities on television, the emergence of new sports from other cultures, and recreation technology (like in-line skates, mountain bikes, GPS, etc.).

PARKS SHAPE DEVELOPMENT

The advertisements are everywhere - "Live next to parks, trails, and open space!" "Located only 1/4 mile from the Mississippi River." "Overlooking scenic Como Park." Most major redevelopments include a central green, a town square, a trail corridor, or a new neighborhood park. Parks define quality of life and create value.



Photograph taken by Mark Apfelbacher

ENVIRONMENTALLY AWARE

Increased sensitivity to ecological issues and the benefits of a healthy ecosystem have people demanding more natural experiences from parks and recreation. In addition, people desire more educational or interpretive programs, are seeking a better balance of environment and recreation, are looking for more passive open space, and have an amplified interest in aesthetics and gardens.



Photograph from Corbis.com

MORE MOBILE

Trails are the number one desired recreation amenity, which can be used by people of all ages and abilities. Many people are interested in passive and natural resource based recreation such as hiking, nature study, bird watching and fishing that demand more recreational/leisure space and locations that will also cater to specific demographic factions.



Photograph from Corbis.com

INCREASINGLY DIVERSE

Increased diversity in Saint Paul means an increased demand for varying park and recreation services from different cultures. This diverse population is calling for more spaces for special community events, additional unprogrammed areas for gatherings and ad-hoc leagues, and facilities for new sports.



Photograph from Corbis.com

FISCALLY CHALLENGED

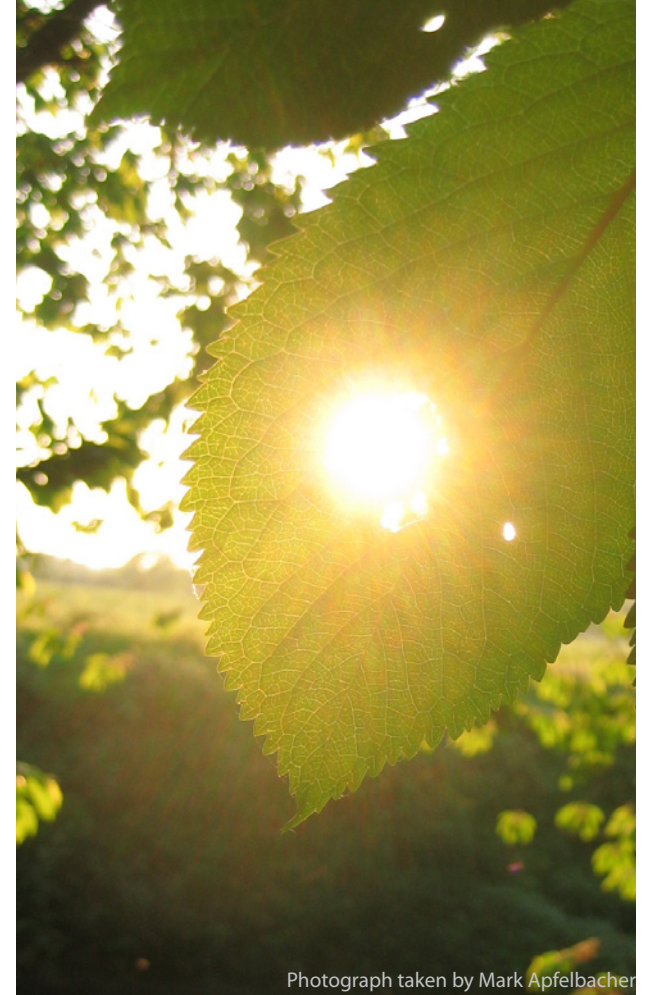
Rising health care costs, anti-tax sentiments, increasing fuel and material costs, and limited funding are reducing the resources available for park and recreation improvements and upkeep. There is an increased need for partnerships, creative funding sources and a renewed focus on quality. There may also be the need to implement user fees and to find a better balance between the new and existing facilities.



Photograph from Corbis.com

HEALTHY MINDED

All age groups are seeing an increase in obesity rates, along with associated health risks, such as high blood pressure and diabetes. As a result there has been increased awareness of the benefits of exercise and a focus on healthy living. The demands on park and recreation include more walking, running, and biking trails, additional senior fitness opportunities, fitness and weight rooms, and more ways to integrate the health of the body and mind into peoples' everyday lifestyles.



Photograph taken by Mark Apfelbacher

CHANGING CLIMATE

The warm winters and variable precipitation rates of the past decade have negatively affected winter sports like ice skating, hockey, and cross country skiing; causing a reconsideration of certain park uses. They have also increased people's interest in environmental sustainability and energy efficiency. Rising energy costs will put a greater emphasis on local recreation options and will increase demand for trail and bikeway connections. Wise use of water, energy, and natural resources are at the forefront of decision making.





3. WHERE WE ARE GOING

the vision

Parks and recreation play a key role in the livability of Saint Paul. When people describe their favorite place, more often than not it is a park or open space area. Parks and recreation are consistently cited as one of the top three reasons why people move to a community (along with schools and convenient access).

Saint Paul loves its parks. So do visitors. With most things, however, it is hard to be perfect. The Parks and Recreation Department is facing some significant issues related to aging infrastructure, decreasing funding, and growing health problems within the general population.

These issues are opportunities for parks and recreation to redefine itself for the next generation. The environment is moving to the forefront of consciousness; and natural sustainability, coupled with economic and social sustainability, is clearly within the purview of the department. By addressing together these three facets of sustainability, Parks and Recreation can contribute to a healthier city and a healthier population.

OUR CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

A detailed analysis of trends, needs, and the existing Saint Paul parks and recreation system begins to showcase some key challenges and opportunities. These six “big issues” require the most consideration in the Vision Plan, and will warrant the greatest attention from the department. Each one could be viewed either as a negative to be merely guarded against, or as a chance to remake the system in a more sustainable way. This Vision Plan sees them as the latter.

Each challenge is a chance to remake the system in a more sustainable way.

Equity and Access

Access to recreation is vital for a healthy community. In an ideal world, a full range parks and recreation facilities would be located in every neighborhood. In reality, the financial cost of operations and maintenance is too high. Saint Paul seeks to balance providing a comprehensive, easily accessed recreation system with the annual cost of operations and the periodic cost of life cycle replacement. This may require making choices about distribution of facilities, giving attention to equitable access, and in some cases having fewer, but better quality, facilities. Assuring equitable access means recognizing that mobility (auto ownership, access to transit, etc.) in some neighborhoods is greater than others and therefore providing more facilities, mobile recreation, increasing transit, or other connections in areas with low mobility is necessary.



Infrastructure Renewal

Saint Paul's Park and Recreation system began in 1849 with the acquisition of the first city park. Much of the current city park system was built in the 1960's and 70's. The parks, buildings and recreation infrastructure from those decades are in significant need of repair and renewal. In addition, the popularity of trails and desired access to nature, the rise of new sports, an emphasis on life-long learning, and our population's declining physical health heighten the need for 21st century recreation facilities and infrastructure.



Change – Demographic, Recreation and Environment

Saint Paul is very different today than it was in the 1960's. The City is now much more diverse. We are more multi-cultural and there are more seniors and fewer children. Everyone has high expectations for our parks and open spaces. Recreation has changed dramatically. New sports and activities have emerged which compete for limited space. Climate change and energy costs affect the way we live, play, move, work and socialize. Parks need to anticipate and embrace change by continuing to keep facilities and programs meaningful and accessible.



Health

Health care is a concern for the community as a whole. Protecting public health and welfare is a fundamental role of government. Obesity rates are at a record high. For the first time in our history our children have a shorter life expectancy than previous generations. Health care costs are rising exponentially. Perhaps because of all of these factors, people crave more meaningful connections to nature and to each other. Parks and recreation are pro-active routes to better personal, family, and community health.



Fun and Excitement

People are stressed. We are working harder than ever before, with less vacation time, longer hours, less frequent, and less distant travel. We need some fun. We need to relax, play a game, splash in the pool, take a walk, or just sit and soak up the sun. Parks provide venues for these activities, and recreation programs offer structured diversions. More and more, parks and recreation will become important as an escape from the daily grind and the issues of the world.



Funding and Sustainability

A disciplined approach to infrastructure investment based on system-wide needs is necessary. This requires a thoughtful strategic approach to infrastructure investment and on-going costs that meets community needs in a creative manner. It also means increased use of partnerships and focusing resources toward core values. In short, the approach must be sustainable. Sustainability means making choices -- economic, environmental, and social choices -- with a view to the best long-term future. It also means having the flexibility to work with others in order to best deliver an activity or renovate a facility. At times it may mean saying no to actions that cannot be accomplished in a long term sustainable manner.



Summary of Challenges & Opportunities

Left unaddressed these challenges will undermine the quality of life and livability of the City. This Plan views these challenges as opportunities to work and act together and recognizes that choices must be made to assure a green and healthy City. A vision for the future is needed to allow Saint Paul Parks and Recreation to effectively and efficiently meet these challenges, build on opportunities, and to help make Saint Paul the *Most Livable City in America*.

THE CITY-WIDE VISION

Saint Paul has a long history of working to shape the future while respecting the past. The City's vision is to be the Most Livable City in America.

Building a great City is multi-faceted, and becoming the Most Livable City in America will involve efforts from all City departments. The City of Saint Paul's Strategic Plan outlines six goals and strategies for achieving the City's vision. These are:

#1: Ready for School, Ready for Life with focus on education

#2: Safe Streets and Safe Homes with focus on crime

prevention, enforcement and prosecution

#3: Expanding Economic Opportunity by investing in existing businesses, revitalizing commercial corridors; investing in the city's downtown and riverfront, affordable housing and jobs

#4: Communities = Healthy Living with focus on the environment and physical health

#5: Quality Infrastructure with focus on quality public amenities and environmental stewardship

#6: The Soul of Saint Paul with focus on investing in arts, culture, sporting opportunities, and community character.

Saint Paul Parks and Recreation has many roles among these goals. **Communities = Healthy Living**, which focuses on health and the environment, however, stands out as the goal that the department will 'own' and contribute most significantly to. The department also

has an important role to play in **building community character**, which is referenced throughout the City of Saint Paul's Strategic Plan. Therefore, the three elements the department will contribute most to are:

Health - Parks and Recreation helps provide the places and facilitates the activities to enhance the physical, social, environmental, mental and economic health of the City and its people.

Community Character - Parks and Recreation is often the core or soul of a neighborhood, district or city. Traditionally, small towns were arranged around a town green; and in Saint Paul, a city of neighborhoods, many park facilities have the same importance. These green spaces and activity areas give life, energy, and character to their surrounding communities. Parks like Harriet Island, Como, Phalen, Highland and others are attractions that define Saint Paul to the region, state and world.

The Environment - Parks and Recreation is the steward of parks, trees, natural areas, waters, and green spaces that help define the environmental quality of neighborhoods, the community and our planet.

Health, Community, and the Environment are the focus elements for Saint Paul Parks and Recreation's efforts to make Saint Paul the Most Livable City in America. They are the touchstones for decision making and allocation of resources. They are the foundation of the Parks and Recreation Department's values, mission, and action plan.

Figure 3.1.

All of the Goals outlined in the City's Strategic Plan contribute to making Saint Paul the Most Livable City in America. Goal #4, Communities=Healthy Living is the goal that the Parks and Recreation Department will take the lead on and contribute most significantly to.



OUR CORE VALUES

These values identify how Saint Paul Parks and Recreation will perform its work:

1. Parks and Recreation will be the champion for health, wellness, active living and the environment.
2. We will respond creatively to changing needs.
3. We will support quality over quantity.
4. We will help connect people, parks, trails and open spaces.
5. Park, open space and trail investments will be catalysts for private sector investment.
6. We will foster economic, environmental, and social sustainability and consider life cycle and operational costs in both the short and long terms.
7. We will evaluate all facility and partnership options before deciding to add infrastructure.
8. We will create a City-wide system of parks and recreational facilities that reflect different needs for different neighborhoods.
9. We will consistently build community awareness, advocacy, and passion for parks and recreation.

OUR VISION

The City's vision is to be the most livable city in America. Parks and recreation play a key role in livability and can help ensure a bright future for the City, our region, and the State. It is in that spirit that this Plan seeks to define the direction for Saint Paul Parks and Recreation. If we are to create a City and environment for our children that is even greater than the one we love today, wise investing in our future is not a luxury, but an imperative. The vision for Saint Paul Parks and Recreation is based on achieving six major goals to help make Saint Paul the most livable city in America. The first three goals (**Active Lifestyles, Vibrant Places and a Vital Environment**) are key elements of community livability. These can only be accomplished, however, through actionable tasks that consider these grand dreams in the context of fiscal and societal realities. Goals 4-6 (**Respond Creatively to Change, Innovate with Every Decision- and Connect the Entire City**) are how Saint Paul will achieve the livability goals. Taken together these six goals create a combined mission and vision statement against which all decisions, infrastructure improvements, programming decisions and other department activities can be measured.

The Parks and Recreation Department Mission and Vision

Helping make Saint Paul the Most Livable City in America by facilitating the creation of active lifestyles, vibrant places, and a vital environment through Parks and Recreation that responds creatively to change, innovates with every decision, and connects the entire city.

OUR GOALS

Helping make Saint Paul the most Livable City in America by facilitating the creation of ...



Active Lifestyles



Vibrant Places



A Vital Environment

through parks and recreation that...



Responds Creatively to Change



Innovates with Every Decision



Connects the Entire City

OUR ACTION PLAN

The following pages list the initiatives the Parks and Recreation Department will undertake to achieve the Vision. This is not a comprehensive list of all department actions, but it reflects priority initiatives designed to help Saint Paul be the most livable city in America. These actions are organized by Goal, though they may have farther-reaching effects. The icons shown next to each initiative illustrate the range of goals that initiative applies to. Case studies from Saint Paul and other cities are included to provide examples of how to reach our goals and initiatives.





GOAL:

**We Will Promote
Active Lifestyles**

4. HOW WE WILL GET THERE

initiatives

By providing culturally relevant recreation that promotes active lifestyles, Saint Paul Parks and Recreation will establish its place as Saint Paul's **champion of health and wellness**. The link between health and an active lifestyle is well established. Many societal trends, however, such as increased computer use and driving, are leading to less active lifestyles. This has disturbing health implications. Recreational opportunity that is relevant to people's lives can establish a lifelong comfort with physical activity and advance the overall health of society.

CASE STUDY Active Living

One Woman's Story...

Saint Paul's Hillcrest Recreation Center, attached to the Hillcrest Library, is a hub of activity year-round. Among its indoor features, are a theater, gymnasium, small fitness room, a walking track, and meeting rooms of various sizes. A woman we shall call Anna, was a frequent visitor to the center, but not a frequent participant in any of the programs offered there. She was in her mid to late forties, heavy set, and was diabetic. She reported that her doctor was neither happy about her present condition, nor optimistic about her future, and decided on her own to begin doing something about it. She purchased a punch card for the walking track and began walking her way to health – literally. It was slow at first and she was not able to walk long or far, but is a perfect example of how every journey begins with a single step. She was willing to take that step and has never looked back! She dropped many pounds, began to feel better and was able to more easily regulate her medical condition – and with fewer drugs.



Initiative 1

Ensure convenient and equitable access to parks and recreation facilities

Every Saint Paul resident should be able to easily get to recreational opportunities close to where they live. We will ensure convenient and equitable access by:

- A) **having publicly accessible park or outdoor recreation space within ½ mile of all residents**, by establishing new parks or facilitating public access to other outdoor recreation spaces in locations identified as park service gaps (See Figure 4.2).
- B) **Having publicly accessible indoor recreation within one mile of all residents**, except in areas where there are concentrations of people with low mobility, where we will provide access to indoor recreation within ½ mile of residents or make other provisions such as improved transit, transit circulators, mobile recreation, or facility partnerships with other organizations (See Figure 4.1).



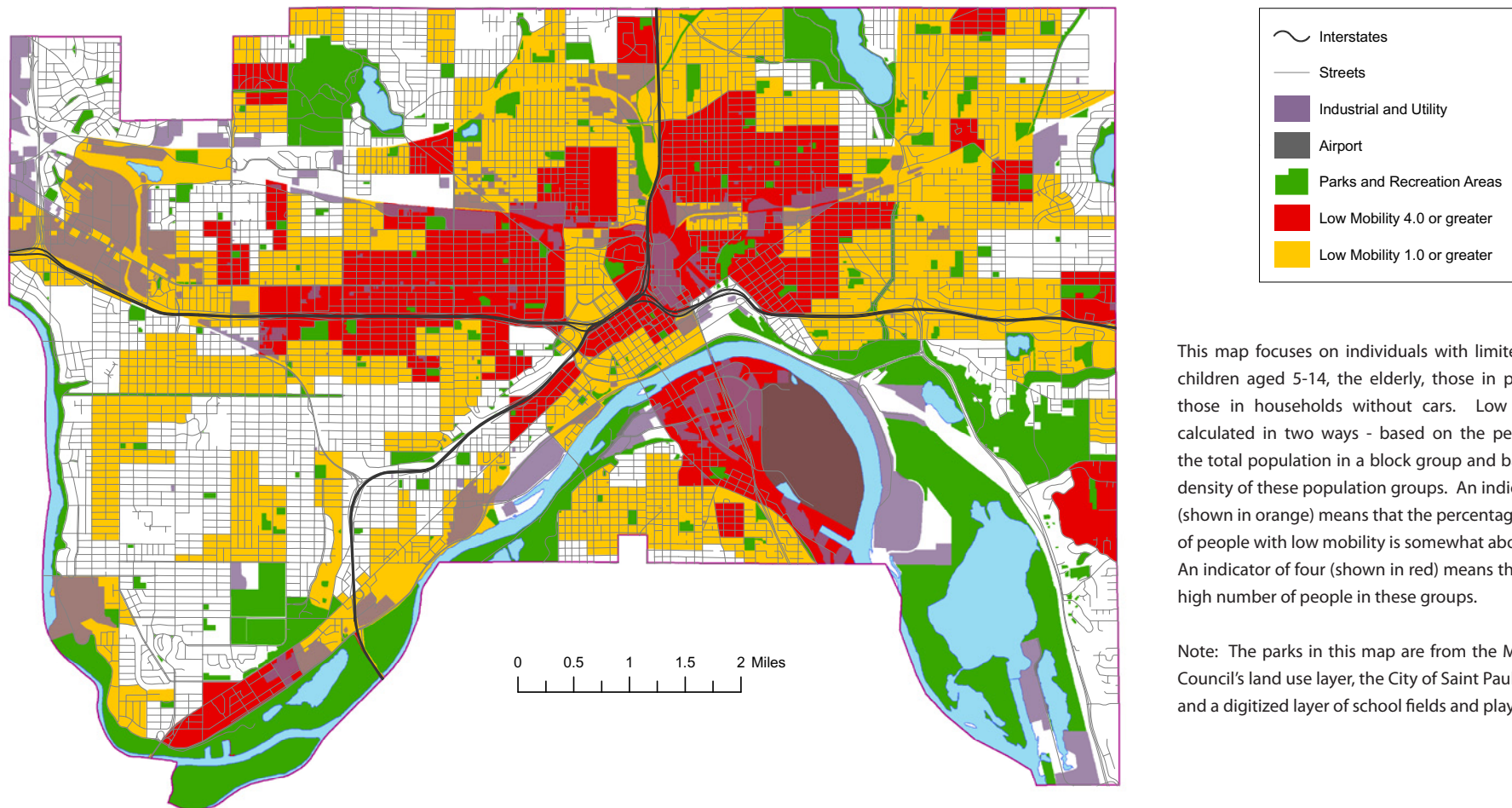
Initiative 2

Demonstrate and encourage healthy choices

We will demonstrate and encourage healthy choices by offering nutritious foods in park vending and at events, emphasizing local food where possible; prohibiting smoking and tobacco use in parks; and providing active lifestyle facilities such as bike racks and changing rooms.

Areas of Low Neighborhood Mobility

Figure 4.1



This map focuses on individuals with limited mobility: children aged 5-14, the elderly, those in poverty, and those in households without cars. Low mobility is calculated in two ways - based on the percentage of the total population in a block group and based on the density of these population groups. An indicator of one (shown in orange) means that the percentage or density of people with low mobility is somewhat above average. An indicator of four (shown in red) means that there is a high number of people in these groups.

Note: The parks in this map are from the Metropolitan Council's land use layer, the City of Saint Paul Parks layer, and a digitized layer of school fields and play areas.

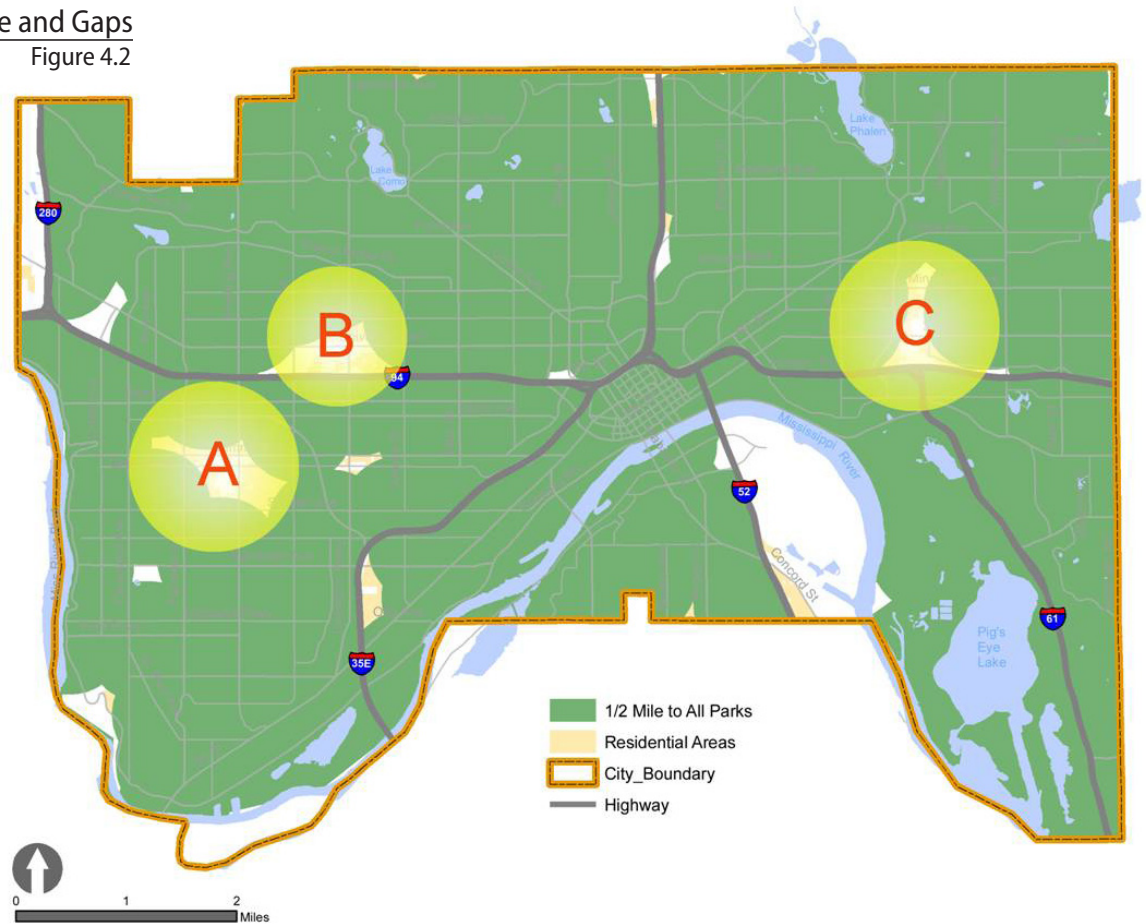
Prepared for: Trust for Public Land Minnesota
2710 University Avenue Suite 300
Saint Paul, MN 55114

Sources: Metropolitan Council, US Census
Date: 20 June 2005

Park Service Area Coverage and Gaps

Figure 4.2

Areas A, B, and C are the only significant gaps in park coverage. They represent residential areas that are located more than half a mile from a park.



Initiative 3

Complete the trail and bikeway system

We will complete the trail and bikeway system by implementing the City Bikeway Plan; completing recreation connections between Como Park and the Mississippi River and along all Grand Rounds Parkways; and implementing trails according to the National Great River Park Plan.

CASE STUDY Active Living

Let's Make it the Whole City...

Following the 2008 Get Fit Twin Cities program, Saint Paul Parks and Recreation will launch a Fitness Tracker program that will initially be accessible to more than 10,000 Saint Paul residents and employees. With the intention of getting as many people active as we can, the Fitness Tracker will enable individuals to develop their own walking routes, convert other physical activities to “steps” and do their own

monitoring of diet and water intake. Making fitness simple, fun and easily accessible is our goal. In combination with increased access to our indoor fitness rooms, walking tracks and health programming, this program is taking big steps to make Saint Paul the Most Livable City in America!



Initiative 4

Seek to develop shared use facilities as a first option when contemplating new or replacement indoor recreation facilities.

Construction and operation of shared-use facilities can help ensure the long term access, use, and successful operation of the park system's indoor recreation components. We will seek partnerships each time we consider modifications to indoor facilities. Such partnerships could involve – schools, libraries, recreation organizations, entertainment providers, retail venues, community service providers and other complimentary uses.



Initiative 5

Improve public safety in our parks

We will improve public safety in our parks by tracking public safety incident data to identify areas that need improvement; and, where public safety improvements are needed we will develop a park-specific strategy to address them. Strategies may include neighborhood watch, increased authority for the park patrol, installation of cameras, and/or redesign of areas using Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Principles.

CASE STUDY Active Living

There's Strength in Numbers...

When you put a group of women together, and okay – a few men too – who are serious about physical activity, you get ‘The Gardening Gals,’ the 2007 runner up team in the Get Fit Twin Cities program, co-sponsored by Saint Paul, Minneapolis, Ramsey County and a host of local businesses. The Gardening Gals (and a few guys) are all on staff at the Marjorie McNeely Conservatory on Saint Paul's Como Campus. As participants in the 2007, 100 day Get Fit Twin Cities program, the 10-person team logged in 179,785 minutes of activity – 300 hours per person! Although most of their activity did not resemble extreme fitness – gardening and walking – it sure resembled extreme commitment and the participants are healthier and fitter. They plan to participate again in 2008. Their colleagues may not be able to match their activity level, but they sure are talking and you can bet there will be some friendly competition along the way!





GOAL:

We Will Create Vibrant Places

Vibrant urban and neighborhood districts have a certain “buzz” of human energy -- they have become what every community wants from its investment efforts. The recipe for a vibrant district includes a handful of essential ingredients, one of which is public space. The presence of well designed and well managed public space can be a powerful **catalyst for private investment**, and is essential to the creation of vibrant places. Saint Paul’s drive to become the Most Livable City in America requires the creation of more and better vibrant districts. Saint Paul Parks and Recreation plays a critical role in this effort by envisioning and creating **public spaces that enliven the districts around them**, enhance social interaction, and promote district-wide property investments.

The title “Hockeytown USA” was bestowed on Saint Paul because people play, love and watch hockey. Anyone can watch, but it takes a Hockeytown to make it a loving obsession.

CASE STUDY

Neighborhood Park Renovation - Upper Landing

Public access to the Mississippi River edge was envisioned years ago and became possible when plans for the relocation of Shepard Road away from the river were finalized. The completion of the roadway construction allowed the reclamation of Upper Landing Park along the Mississippi River.

A collaborative public design process established key goals for the park. It had to serve as an entrance into St. Paul's downtown; and it had to enhance connections between the upper elevations of the city and the river edge, the existing bicycle and pedestrian trails in Lower Landing Park, Eagle Parkway and the Samuel H. Morgan Regional Trail. With the creation of the new Upper Landing neighborhood, it also needed to provide a public plaza and connection to the Mississippi River.

The resulting design called for the creation of three distinct areas. The largest portion, a grassy, open, active park space, is highlighted by a landscape reference to the river's history of flooding. Four bronze bird sculptures with decorative fountains, hint at the important role the Mississippi plays as the continent's main migratory bird flyway. Along the river edge, is a promenade with an intimate river edge amphitheater. A public gathering plaza will connect the Upper Landing neighborhood with bicycle and pedestrian trails, and a newly created river landing will provide a facility for commercial boat transportation across the river during large events at Harriet Island, Lilydale Regional Park or other destinations along the river.

Upper Landing; traversed by bicycle, pedestrian, auto, rail and river traffic; and located in close proximity to downtown, the Science Museum of Minnesota, and the newly created Upper Landing neighborhood, is expected to become a key feature and a vibrant public place for downtown Saint Paul.



Initiative 1

Require that the siting, design and funding of parks, open space and trails be an integral feature of major redevelopment projects.

We will require the consideration of new and existing parks right along with the overall design of redevelopment projects. We will encourage orientation of new development toward existing parks wherever possible and extension of green space and trail links into redevelopment areas. We will ensure that development adjacent to parks does not create a barrier to public access, use, or enjoyment of a park facility.

Other Resources

The Value of Third Places

In *The Great Good Place*, author Ray Oldenburg identifies what he calls “Third Places” as a key to community vitality. Third Places are the places apart from home and work where people can interact with other members of the same community. They are the social experience of cafes, pubs, taverns, coffee shops and the like. The TV show “Cheers” was an example of a vibrant social place. Some City parks function as Third Places. Park and recreation designers should continue to strive to create places that foster community interaction and bring people together.



Initiative 2

Design and program for community gathering or festival opportunities

During park renovation and for new parks, we will design community gathering spaces for festivals and events, in order to encourage social networking and to build sense of community. These community gathering spaces will be designed appropriately for the particular park under development or renovation. This means we will consider a gathering space's size, access, utilities, and other factors relative to the constraints of the park and its surrounding context. We will also ensure that the scheduling and location of events take the facilities available into account, so as to not overwhelm a park or other facility.



Initiative 3

Evaluate the importance of food and explore the use of public/private partnerships for enhanced food experiences

We will evaluate the importance of food in parks and explore the use of public/private partnerships for enhanced food experiences as a means to enliven parks and reinforce them as places of community gathering. This may mean more use of food carts and/or expanded non-traditional food choices.

CASE STUDY

Quality Food Concessions Sea Salt and Tin Fish – Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board



Tin Fish at Lake Calhoun

For years the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board operated traditional concessions (hot dogs and soda pop) at Lake Harriet, Lake Nokomis, Lake Calhoun and Minnehaha Park. They staffed and ran the concession themselves, making a small annual profit. In 2002, based on a desire to improve quality and profits, the MPRB solicited proposals from food vendors to operate the concessions at these four locations. The MPRB selected private vendors to operate the different locations. At Lake Harriet and Lake Nokomis, the operators continued to provide the same traditional concession fare (popcorn, hot dogs and ice cream). At the Lake Calhoun and Minnehaha Park locations, the vendors now offer a variety of fresh seafood items in a unique park setting. They remodeled the venues to meet their operational needs and obtained wine and beer licenses, turning the food operations into more of a restaurant style experience. The operators do a great business; visitors are happy to get locally based, non-traditional food offerings; and the MPRB makes more money. Both concessions have gone from offering a commodity (a generic hot dog) to creating a food experience and place to gather, socialize and meet friends.

*St. Paul truly is a River City -
The City's 17 miles of Mississippi
Riverfront are more than any other
municipality on the River.*



Initiative 4 **Facilitate wireless communication networks**

We will facilitate wireless communication networks in parks as partnership opportunities become available. We will, in particular, consider installation of broadband along the Grand Rounds Parkway as a means to connect people, facilities, and the entire community.



Initiative 5 **Ensure attractive, functional, and engaging four season public spaces**

Through our in-house design section and outside consultants, we will facilitate high quality design for both new and renovated parks projects. The specific elements and practices that contribute to high quality design will vary with each project, but several principles will always hold true. To ensure high quality design we will:

- A) Meet or exceed accepted design standards for accessibility, safety, and function.
- B) Use high quality materials, chosen for their longevity, ease of maintenance, and aesthetic appeal.
- C) Design for four season use by incorporating winter activities and havens, shade from the sun, multi-season trails, and other elements.
- D) Prepare an operations and maintenance plan to sustain the high quality experience over time.
- E) Blend recreation, socialization, environment, culture and art in all designs.



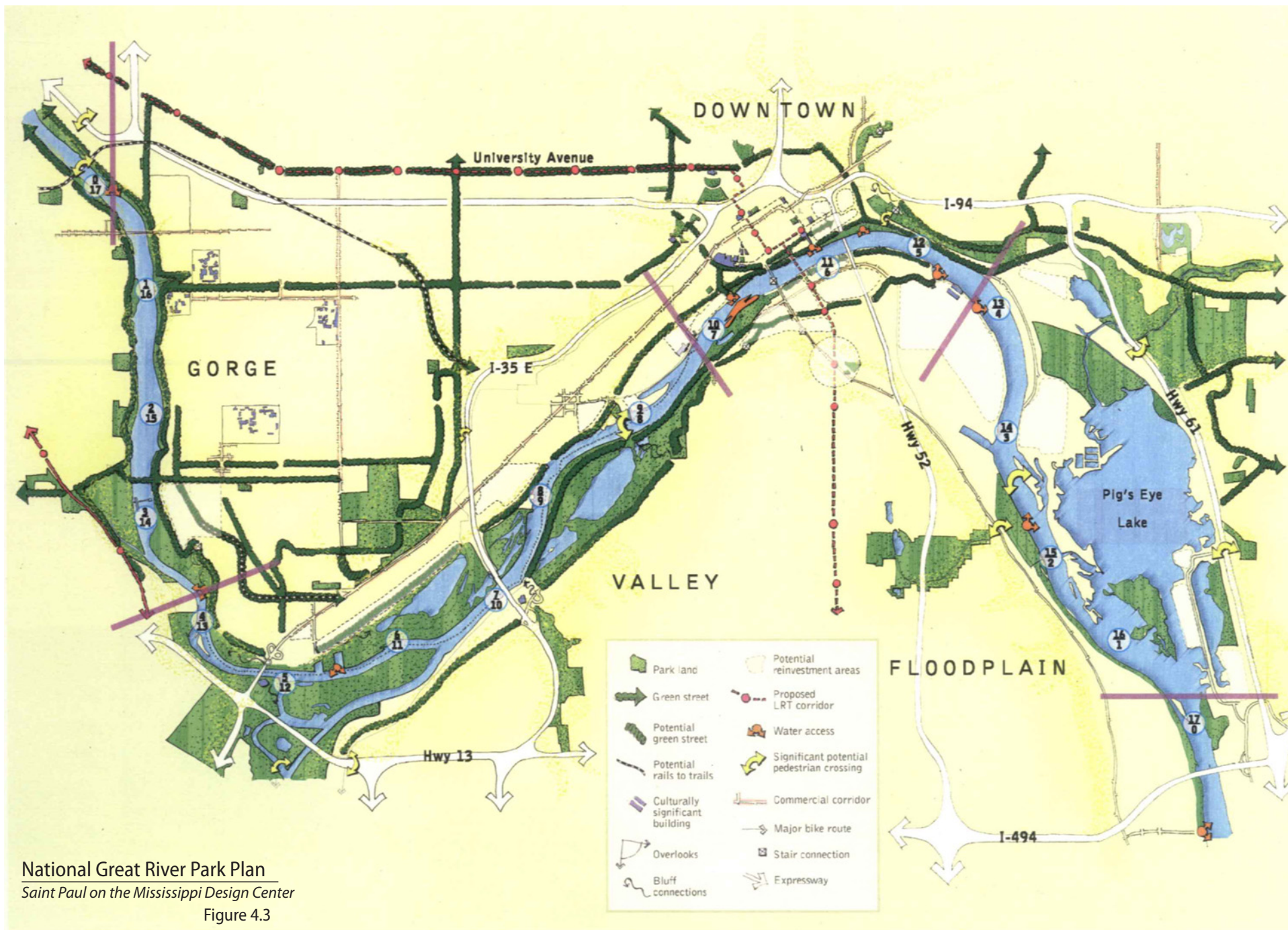
Initiative 6 **Analyze the cost-benefit of festivals and events and identify methods of making them fiscally sustainable**

While festivals and events are important economic, social, and community activities, they must justify the public investment required to hold the events and efforts must be made to make them fiscally sustainable in the long term. We will analyze the costs and benefits of festivals and events of varying scales and identify methods of making them fiscally sustainable.



Initiative 7 **Implement the National Great River Park Plan**

We will continue to implement the park, trail, connection, and investment recommendations of the National Great River Park Plan, by continuing to build partnerships to enhance access to and the use, preservation, and quality of the Mississippi River Corridor (See Figure 4.3).







GOAL:

We Will Promote a Vital Environment

As the overseer of public open spaces and the urban forest, Saint Paul Parks and Recreation is in a position to **exemplify environmental leadership** through design, maintenance, and operations. Societal understanding of environmental health continues to grow, as does the value we place on preserving natural open spaces and linking them with the places we live, work, and play. This same value reaches into the built environment through care for the urban forest and sustainable approaches to park development. Innovative practices and sustainable investment in these areas will help us keep Saint Paul's environment -- and therefore its people -- healthy.

*Sustainability means
making choices -- economic,
environmental, and social
choices -- with a view to the
best long-term future.*



Initiative 1 **Conduct a Natural Resource Inventory**

We will conduct a Natural Resource Inventory to prioritize restoration of existing natural resources.



Initiative 2 **Expand the environmental education program**

We will expand the environmental education program to enhance knowledge and awareness and include volunteer activities that promote service and learning.



Initiative 3 **Provide interpretive signage**

We will provide interpretive signage and information on all environmental demonstration projects and significant natural resource management projects.



Initiative 4 **Creatively consider storm water impacts and benefits**

We will improve water quality by increasing infiltration of on-site storm water in parks. Strategies may include pervious pavements in parking lots; shoreline restoration and buffers; conversion of turf areas to native vegetation; and infiltration of water in swales, rain gardens, stormwater retention or detention ponds, and other methods. We will consider collecting and treating off-site stormwater flow when that water can become a recreation amenity or when water collection does not compromise recreation or park aesthetics.



Initiative 5 **Update and implement the Street and Park Tree Master Plan**

We will increase reforestation by updating and implementing the Street and Park Tree Master Plan. This, in addition to facilitating city-wide tree planting efforts, will increase the scale and quality of the urban forest.



Initiative 6 **Model environmental leadership**

We will model environmental leadership by:

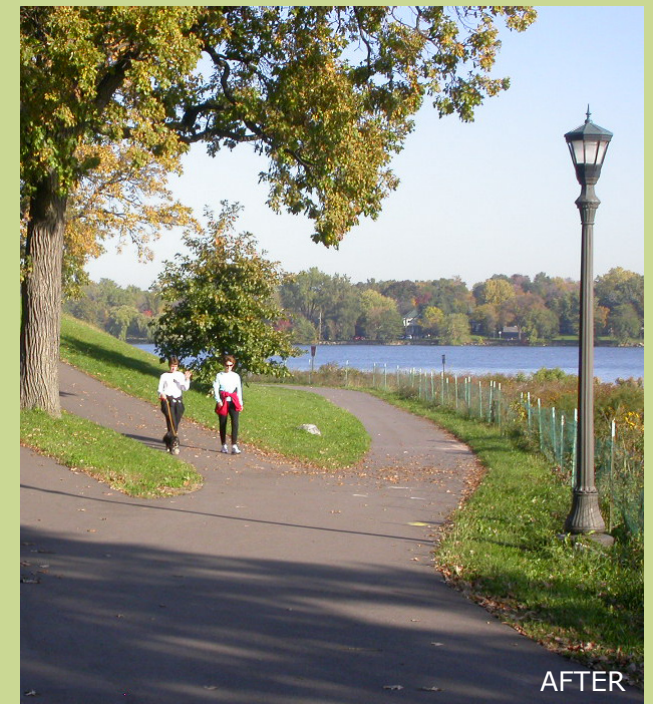
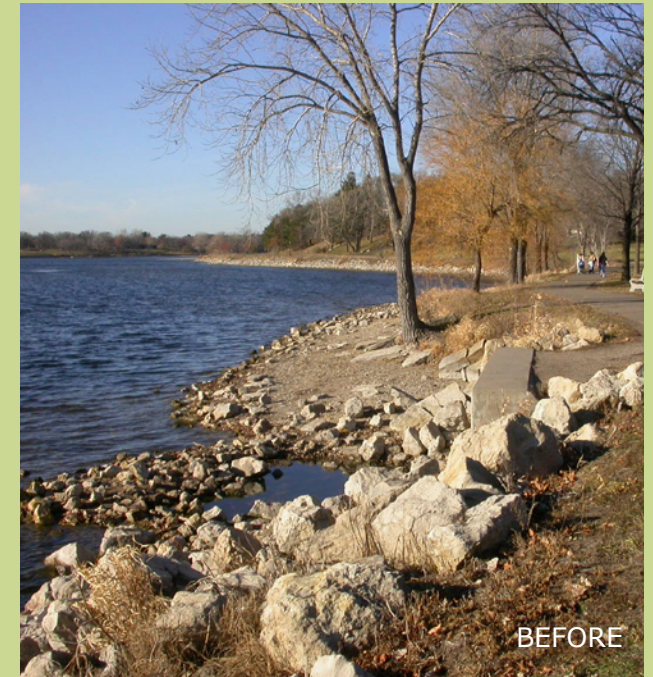
- A) **using LEED®** (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) or similar standards on all new park buildings.
- B) **providing recycling receptacles** in addition to trash receptacles at all parks and recreation facilities.
- C) **reducing the use of fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides by 20 %.**
- D) **reducing energy consumption of the vehicle fleet by 25%** by replacing road travel and maintenance vehicles with electric/alternative fuel/hybrid vehicles and encouraging increased the use of transit and non-motorized transportation.
- E) **decreasing energy use in existing buildings by 15%** through the use of energy audits and implementing efficiency measures.
- F) **continuing partnerships to capture/re-use renewable energy resources** like wood waste and tree trimmings.

CASE STUDY

Phalen Shoreline Restoration

Since its acquisition by the City of Saint Paul in 1899, the Lake Phalen shoreline has been dramatically altered. By the late 1990s, the shoreline was in a highly degraded state. In 2001, driven by safety and water quality concerns, the Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District, Saint Paul Parks and Recreation, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and additional local partners initiated a comprehensive, ecological shoreland restoration plan. This plan utilized native plant species and bio-engineering techniques to stabilize the lakeshore, establishing a sustainable, natural shoreland. This type of restoration is cost-effective, creates valuable wildlife habitat, reduces erosion, improves water quality, and is visually appealing.

The stabilization work used a combination of staff, contractor and volunteer labor. Since 2001, over 1,800 students have donated thousands of volunteer hours to the project. The use of student labor results in hands-on stewardship and education and creates tangible environmental community benefits. In 2005, the project received the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts – Project of the Year Award. By the end of 2008, the project will have resulted in approximately two miles of stable, biologically diverse shoreland, making it one of the largest lakeshore ecological restoration projects in the state.







GOAL:

We Will Respond Creatively to Change

American recreational demand is in a unique time of transition from the neighborhood-based, multi-use activity parks of yesterday to the corridor-based open spaces and specialized facility hubs of tomorrow. Trails of various types that traverse scenic or architecturally interesting corridors are expected to lead recreational demand for the foreseeable future. In the category of sports, league play, with an expectation for very high quality facilities at centralized locations, rules the day. As a result, the neighborhood park plays a smaller role for league sports and active recreation, but remains vital to neighborhood quality of life. Combined, these trends call for strategic allocation of resources in new directions and the need to **refine park facilities to accommodate new demands.**

Cultural differences, variation in levels of mobility, and income and age distribution suggest that when it comes to parks and recreation, “one size” should not be assumed to fit all. We recognize and embrace the fact that **different neighborhoods have different needs.** This idea will influence facility service areas, types of facilities, programs, and other decisions.

As changes occur, it is important to always remember that the uses and facilities existing in a park today may not be the uses and facilities in the same park in the future. This has always been the case, from the beginning of Saint Paul’s park system (which was very different from what we see today) to the most recent improvements. The park sites, however, will remain in the common trust in perpetuity. This sentiment is best expressed in this way: **the land will endure, its use will evolve.**

CASE STUDY

Mobile Recreation

“What’s going on? What are your kids doing?” one of the parents asked another parent as they observed a group of children playing at their neighborhood park.

“This is summer camp. There is recreation staff here every Monday and Thursday afternoon providing a variety of activities for the children like arts and crafts and special games. My children love it. They have even gotten me to play the Poison Jello Mold game”.

This sentiment was heard all around Saint Paul by the Roaming Rec staff as they traveled to different locations engaging youth in a summer program that is billed as ‘bringing the fun to you!’ Roaming Rec, which is one component of the mobile recreation initiative, makes recreation activities accessible to youth who have no means, or no safe means, of getting to and from a recreation center due to its location or whose parents prefer having them close to home.

The Roaming Rec program is a summer drop-in, non-custodial, self-contained mobile recreation program on wheels, bringing recreation activities out into the neighborhoods of Saint Paul. Staff travel to passive parks, public housing sites and homeless shelter; leading sports, active games, quiet games, arts and crafts and special events. Although the target age for the program is youth, ages 6-12, staff are trained and ready to engage pre-schoolers, teens and even parents who want to play and have fun.

During the school year, mobile recreation provides afterschool activities, teen programming, and family fun at schools to: public housing sites, recreation centers, and homeless shelters. Future expansion includes programming for seniors.





Initiative 1

Regularly gather customer and resident feedback on needs, satisfaction and trends

We will regularly gather customer and resident feedback on needs, satisfaction, and trends, in order to improve athletic, educational, cultural, social, natural, spiritual, and



Initiative 2

Establish a foundation to provide additional financial and community support for parks and recreation

We will create a non-profit foundation to act as a promotion and fund-raising arm for Parks and Recreation.



Initiative 3

Improve access to a broad range of aquatic experiences

Aquatics is a highly desired recreation amenity. We will improve Saint Paul residents' access to aquatic facilities by:

A) **providing a unique aquatic center in each quadrant**, that becomes a destination for the entire city.

B) **expanding access to public/private aquatics facilities** and programs through collaboration, coordination, and communication.



Initiative 4

Meet changing recreation needs

Recreation needs are constantly changing. With each new trend comes a need for new facility types. We will meet several current major trends by:

A) **creating active lifestyle centers** to provide access to higher quality concentrations of recreation and community activities; and to consolidate and collaborate to increase the hours, quality, and flexibility of indoor recreation.

B) **increasing opportunities for after school programs** that meet the needs of children with working parents.

C) **providing 4-6 off-leash dog areas**, which will vary in size and experience, throughout the city, focusing initially on creating one in each quadrant.

D) **providing access to high quality full size dedicated use turf sport fields** (soccer, Lacrosse, rugby, etc.) **within every quadrant**.

E) **providing a community garden within one mile of every household**, through expansion of the community garden program and leveraging of partnerships.

F) **adding senior fitness programs in every quadrant**, focusing on areas/locations of aging demographics, and utilizing improved transit and walking trails.

G) **offering culturally specific recreation programs on a community level**, which may result in more customized recreation programs and activities related to particular neighborhoods, cultures or districts.

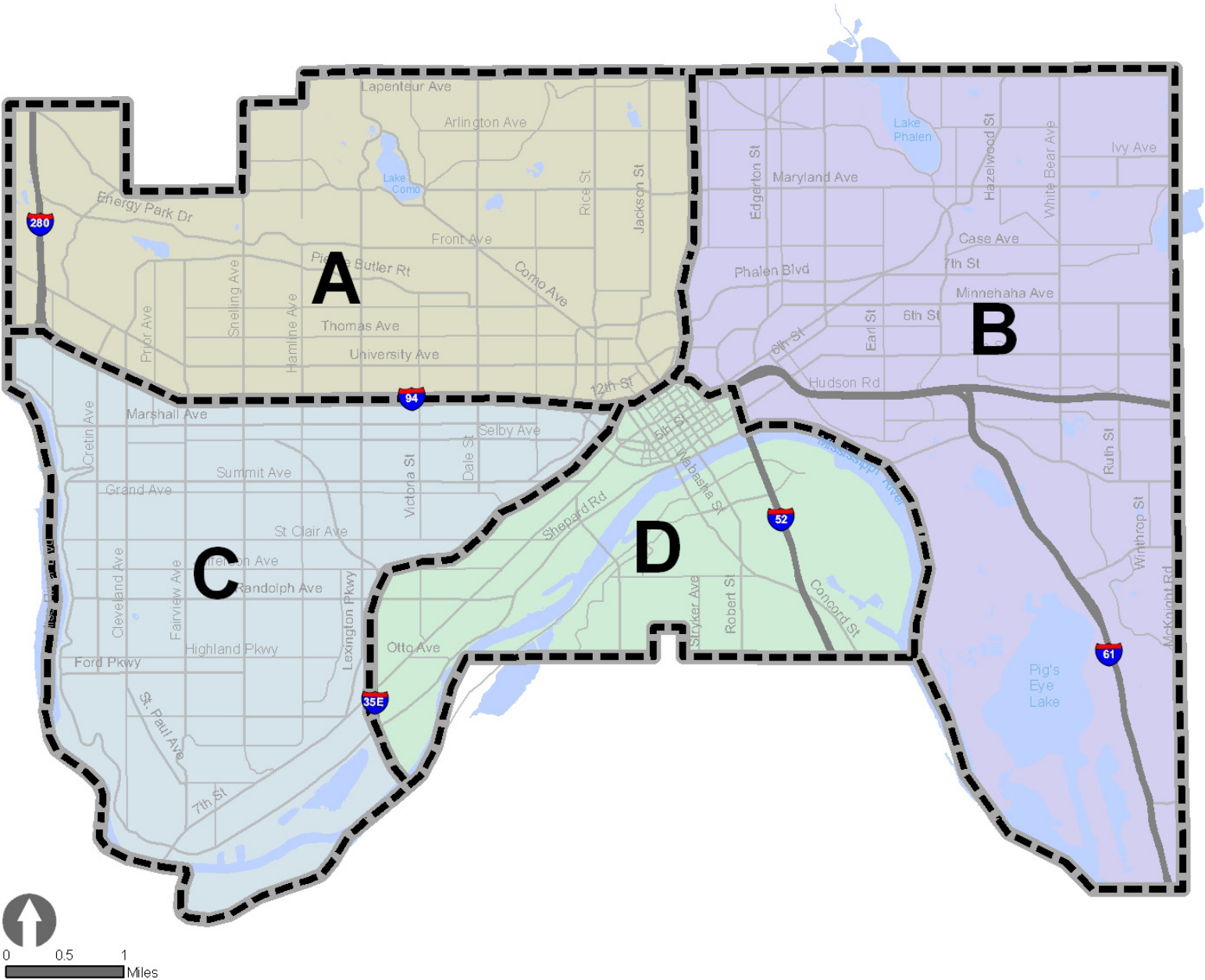
H) **providing alternative sport opportunities**, such as a skate park, BMX bike track, mountain bike trail, disc golf, or others, in each quadrant of the city.

Estimates show that more Saint Paul households have dogs (36%) than children (26%).

Park Service Quadrant Map

Figure 4.4

These quadrants represent service areas that are based on major geographic barriers. The purpose of planning based on service area is to allow equitable access to facilities.



CASE STUDY

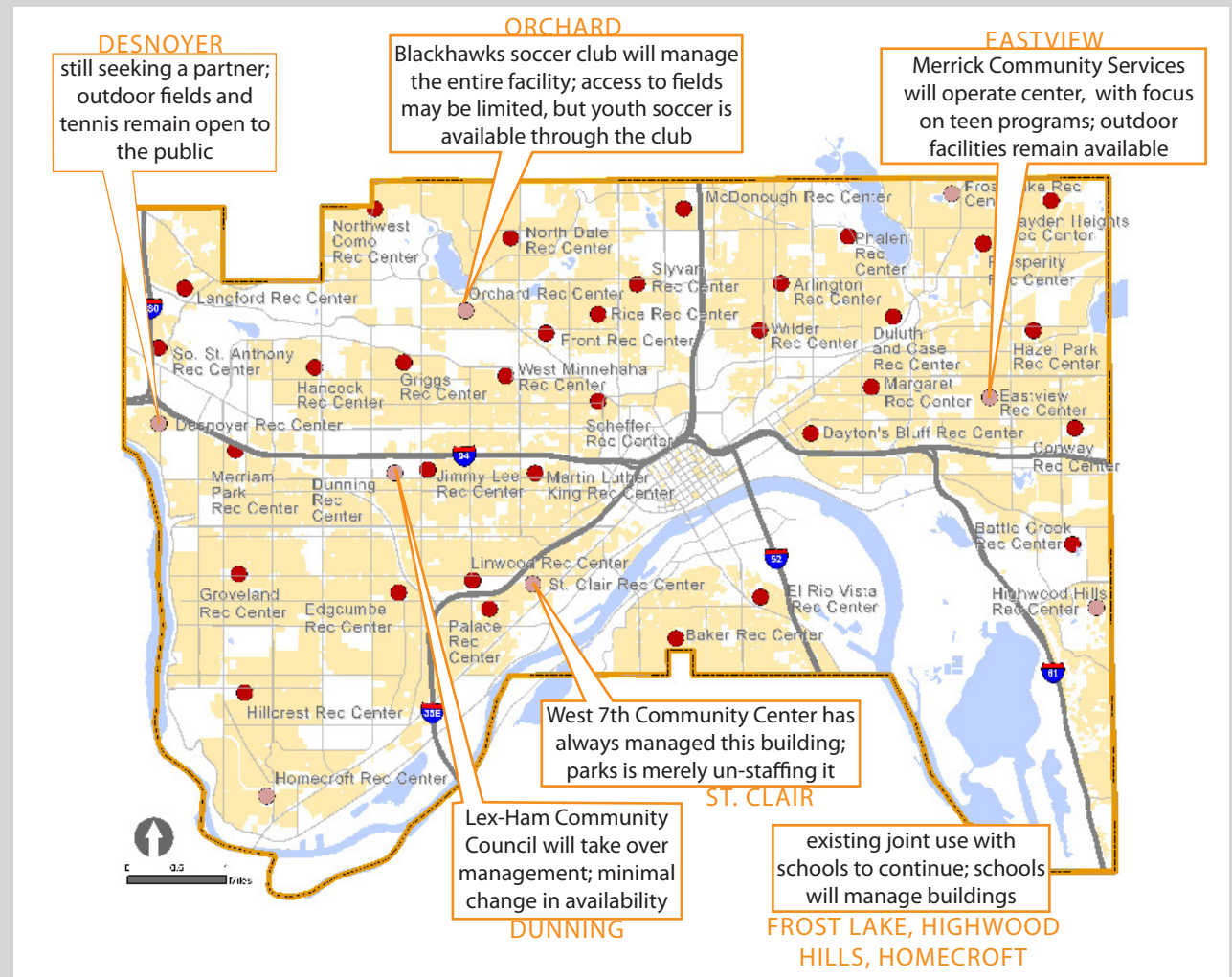
Repositioning of Recreation Centers

Buildings are expensive to operate. Maintenance, utilities, upgrades, and staffing all put a strain on any building manager: strain that increases with the number of facilities managed. This was the case right here in Saint Paul, where the Parks and Recreation Department was operating 41 recreation centers, many nearing 40 years old. Recreation centers are, in many cases, the hearts of the communities that surround them, providing essential recreational programs and deep memories. The department, therefore, was faced with a conundrum. How could it continue to provide the quality services associated with the numerous recreation centers, while addressing growing budget issues?

The answer was to reposition eight centers – not close them, but reposition them. In 2006-07 the department stopped managing these centers, instead relying on partnerships to keep the buildings open and to provide some recreational or community programming. The Orchard Recreation Center is now managed by the Blackhawks Soccer Club, which uses the building and fields for its extensive youth leagues. The West 7th Community Center and Merrick Community Services, both social service organizations, now manage St. Clair and Eastview, respectively. The Eastview Center has a particular teen focus, due to its proximity to Harding High School. The Lex-Ham Community Council, which has always had a management role at Dunning, has taken over complete management of that facility. Three “joint use” centers (managed in cooperation with schools) are now managed exclusively by those schools.

Though the department continues to own the land and buildings, the ability to shift management to another entity is saving money. It also addresses a current recreation trend: a general willingness among the public to travel farther for higher quality facilities. To that end, the department will be renovating certain facilities into multi-amenity “activity centers,” while allowing the repositioned recreation center

to provide more locally-oriented or more activity-specific programs. The benefits can already be seen. The reallocation of staff from these centers has allowed for two new positions specifically dedicated to city-wide health and wellness.







GOAL:

We Will Innovate with Every Decision

We must **always make it sustainable**. Every facility, project, and capital investment should be viewed through the lens of economic, environmental and social sustainability. Evaluation and project modification from these points of view will make investments smarter in both the short and long terms.

When faced with difficult choices about facilities and services, we will **invest in quality over quantity**. Quality facilities will enhance user experience, access, and satisfaction while reducing operating costs. This may mean conversion of some lower quality and shared use facilities to other uses or combining uses to allow higher quality facilities.

It is also important to note that not all park spaces can optimally provide for all uses. Slope, size, shape, location, access, surroundings, and other factors all influence the suitable use of public land. We will carefully analyze these factors when designing parks, in order to deliver the best facility for the planned uses and existing conditions.

CASE STUDY

McMurray Fields

Soccer is booming in Saint Paul and has grown to be one of the largest sports. There are nearly 25,000 soccer players in Saint Paul and the Twin Cities ranks 3rd highest in the nation for soccer players per capita. Saint Paul's eight dedicated soccer fields and other shared multi-purpose fields are unable to meet the demand. Natural turf fields can host a finite number of events per week before becoming run down, sometimes to the point of becoming unusable. Once the turf breaks down the field is out of use until new grass is established.

The City decided to install three artificial turf fields at McMurray Athletic Fields in order to create a more sustainable long term facility for soccer. The artificial turf is considered safer and more forgiving to the players than natural turf and it does not have the wear and condition issues associated with natural turf. When lighting is completed, its location away from residential areas will allow almost continuous use 8 - 9 months of the year. The many public and private leagues couldn't wait for completion and field reservations quickly filled.



Initiative 1

Enhance sustainability

Sustainability refers to something's ability to remain fiscally, environmentally, and socially vital in the very long term. We will enhance the sustainability of the parks and recreation system by:

- A) **designing and implementing a system-wide sustainability evaluation process**, to evaluate all new decisions and existing practices on the basis of their contributions to fiscal, environmental, and social well-being. Evaluations would then be performed on all existing systems, from lawn mowing to in-office copies, in order to move the department, by small increments, toward a more sustainable, innovative operation.
- B) **creating a materials research report**, which identifies and rates the sustainability of various products which could be used in facility design and implementation, and in operations and maintenance. Items considered may include play areas, artificial turf surfaces, trail surfaces, permeable pavements, lighting options, wood for signage and architecture, maintenance equipment, office paper, and others. The purpose of this research report would be to have, close at hand, a variety of options for accomplishing innovation and sustainability goals when decisions arise. This would directly feed into the system-wide sustainability evaluation process.



Initiative 2

Renovate and upgrade some low and moderate quality existing facilities

We will renovate and upgrade low and moderate quality existing facilities that fall *outside* the service areas of high quality facilities of the same type (See Figure 4.5).



Initiative 3

Make park and recreation facility and improvement decisions based on a system-wide evaluation of needs and resources

It is critical for the ongoing quality of the parks and recreation system that decisions not be made on a case-by-case basis, but rather consider the entire system. We will make decisions based on a system-wide evaluation of needs and resources by:

A) **creating a comprehensive asset management program** that determines infrastructure improvement priorities based on a holistic view of system-wide needs and uses the Recreation Facility Service Standards and Activity Delivery Guidelines as guides. The initial asset management program will be completed by 2008 and updated annually. The asset management program will be the basis for CIB funding.

B) **selecting priority facility improvements for bond funding based on the asset management program.** A funding request will be submitted in 2008 and every two years thereafter.

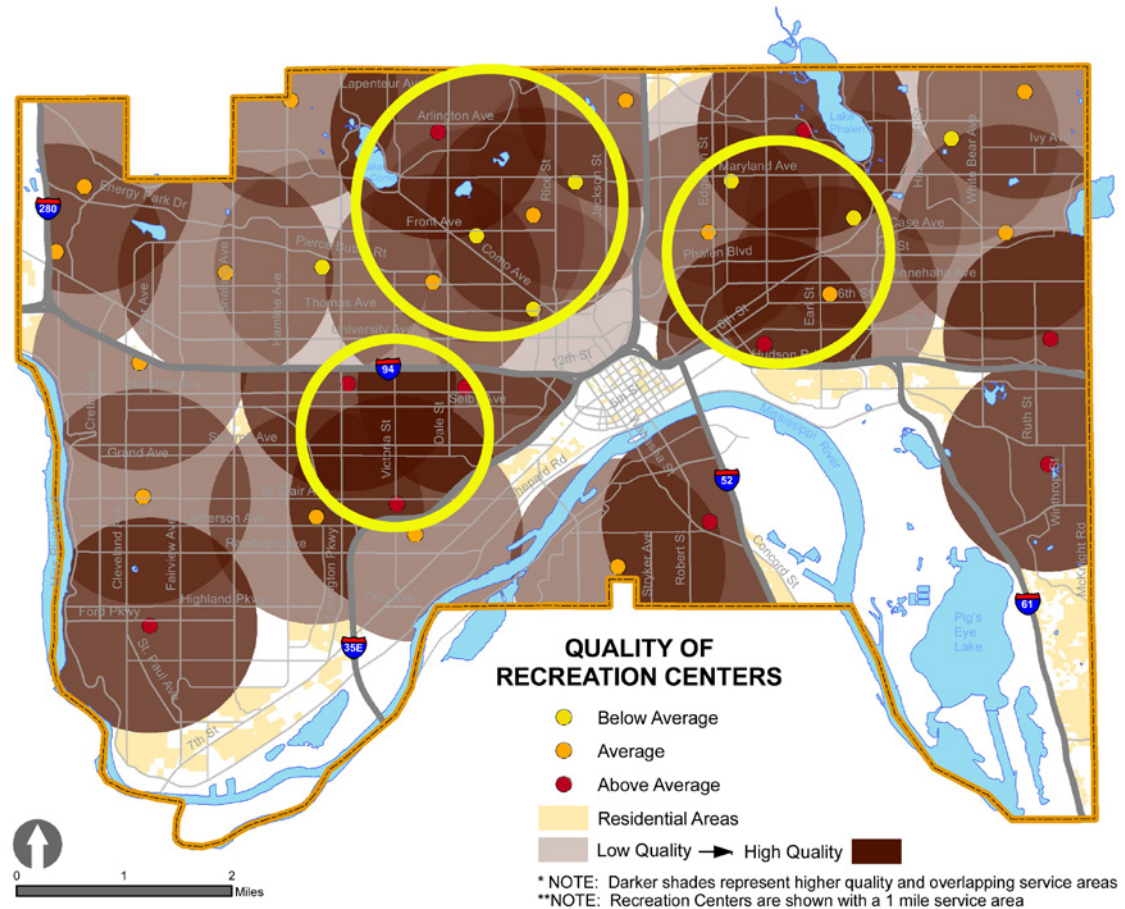
C) **preparing a master plan and capital improvement plan for each park** to help guide facility improvements and to identify long term improvement funding needs. Master plans for all parks should be completed by 2013.



Initiative 4

Reprogram some low and moderate quality existing facilities

We will reprogram low and moderate quality existing facilities that fall *inside* the service areas of high quality facilities of the same type (See Case Study on page 57).



Quality and Quantity of Recreation Centers

Figure 4.5

The three areas that are circled in yellow represent locations that are over-served due to the quantity and quality of recreation centers that exist in those neighborhoods.

CASE STUDY

Como Campus

Prior to the new millennium, Saint Paul's Como Zoo was a typical example of zoos built in the 1940's and 50's. It had a large number of animals displayed in simple cages. People came to see the animals, but did not learn much about animal habitat or their natural behavior; and the cost of maintaining the large number of animals was high.

In 2003 a framework plan was developed for the Como Campus to establish a vision for the future of the Como Zoo, Marjorie McNeely Conservatory, Amusement Ride area, and other elements. A major outcome of that effort was a focused vision for future development of the zoo grounds concentrating on becoming better rather than bigger, and focusing on establishing 8-10 world class animal habitats rather than a greater number of marginal experiences. For example, Polar Bear Odyssey will be over five times the size of the former exhibit, creating an industry leading habitat located on the footprint of what had previously housed multiple bear species in four exhibits. For Como, focusing on quality versus quantity in facilities and programs was a choice necessary for achieving other aspects of its vision for creating meaningful and memorable visitor experiences. Quality animal habitats include elements that make possible the following related outcomes, all of which are essential for the future success of Como: immersion experiences for visitors, integration of plants and animals reflecting their setting in the natural world, establishing a setting for formal and informational education opportunities, and incorporation of relevant conservation messages.

Today Como Campus has re-established itself as a well loved visitor destination.

CASE STUDY

Battle Creek Winter Park

A cooperative venture



Saint Paul and Ramey County faced similar issues with their winter sports facilities – changing winter climate made skiing and sledding unpredictable and the operational costs of snowmaking and grooming keep escalating. Additionally, Saint Paul has found that snowmaking at golf course sites like Como Park damages turf and delays spring opening of the golf course. The solution is a cooperative venture that should also prove to be a win-win situation for both organizations and for winter and summer sports enthusiasts.

On Saint Paul's east border, the Battle Creek Regional Park, operated by Ramsey County Parks and Recreation and collocated with Saint Paul Parks and Recreation's Battle Creek Recreation Center, has a 10K+ cross country ski facility. During the winter, Saint Paul Parks and Recreation operates the Como Park Ski Center on the Como Park Golf Course. The convenient in-town ski area features cross country ski trails, artificial snow making for downhill skiing and snowboarding, and a chalet with food service and equipment rental.

The proposed cooperative solution is Battle Creek Winter Park, an improved facility designed to provide an extended winter ski opportunity to Saint Paul residents and visitors. To accomplish this, Ramsey County Parks and Recreation is pursuing funding for artificial snow making equipment for the Battle Creek facility, e.g. underground water supply, snow making and grooming equipment, additional lighting for cross country ski trails. At same time, Saint Paul Parks and Recreation is exploring the possibility of moving its downhill ski, snowboarding and cross country ski operations from Como Park to the proposed Battle Creek Winter Park.



Initiative 5

Enhance the quality of athletic fields

We will improve outdoors sports experiences by enhancing the quality of athletic fields through the use of artificial turf, engineered soils, lighting, irrigation, and other methods.

Battle Creek Winter Park would offer consistent snow conditions for ski meets, events and lessons, efficient shared operations and would not impact golf or other summer recreation uses. For recreational cross country skiers, Saint Paul would continue to groom cross country ski trails at the Como, Highland Nine Hole and Phalen Park Golf Courses on natural snow. The proposal is contingent upon allocation of funding for the artificial snow making infrastructure, but given the cooperative nature and efficiency offered by the Winter Park it is likely to be a success.



Initiative 6 **Establish and publicize a replacement timeline**

We will establish and publicize a replacement timeline for each new facility at the time of initial construction. We will develop facility replacement and renewal targets for existing facilities as part of the asset management program.



Initiative 7 **Think about the activity first, and then consider all possible facility and delivery options**

People are interested in being able to participate in the activities they desire, not in who the provider is. We will facilitate participation in activities as a primary objective. This will mean continuing to foster effective partnerships with private and other public organizations to offer seamless and efficient delivery of park and recreation services, programs and facilities. At times this may mean using a school or other non-city facility for public recreation or using a City facility for private recreation, school, or other civic use.



Initiative 8 **Create a comprehensive volunteer program**

We will expand use of volunteers, in order to more efficiently and cost-effectively operate the system and deliver programs, while also engaging the broader community in the functions of the department. We will develop a standardized system for recruiting, placing, retaining, managing, evaluating, and rewarding volunteers; building on the success of the volunteer program at the Como Campus. Successful volunteer efforts take coordination and staff resources. We will therefore create a volunteer coordinator position(s) when resources become available.

People are interested in being able to participate in the activities they desire, not in who the provider is.





GOAL:

We Will Connect the Entire City

Saint Paul has tremendous parks, but they are often thought of as a collection rather than as a comprehensive park system that serves the entire community. It is important, therefore, that we **raise community awareness** of the park system as a city-wide system with neighborhood delivery. This will likely lead to greater advocacy of and passion for Saint Paul parks.

Naturally, therefore, we must work toward actually **building a system, not a collection**. By creating a City-wide system of parks and recreational facilities that are strategically located and properly programmed, Parks and Recreation can more economically and effectively deliver services. Facilities will be designed to draw from a broad area when appropriate and focus on a small area when needed. The focus of parks and recreation can no longer be an exclusively neighborhood-based model throughout the City.

In order to be a truly livable and sustainable community and in order to capitalize on the park “system” concept, we must create an **interconnected network of parks, trails, and open spaces**. Regional and community destinations will have regional transit and trail links both to them and between them. Neighborhood facilities will have local sidewalk and trail links.

Above all, **parks and recreation will be the facilitator** of active lifestyles, recreation programs, environmental education, public art, and community celebration. We will not only provide services, but also be a link to services offered within the city but beyond our own scope.



Grand Rounds Parkway Route

Figure 4.6

Recently, the Saint Paul Grand Round Master Plan outlined a 29-mile recreational greenway loop for driving, bicycling, walking, and in-line skating.



Initiative 1

Build the Grand Rounds Parkway

We will build the Grand Rounds Parkway from a loop route to a complete parkway by adding off-street trails and on-street bike lanes where possible; and by “greening” the Grand Rounds to create a scenic recreational parkway experience, enhance property values, and build tourism. We will reinforce parkway identity through the use of cohesive paving, lighting, landscaping, signage, and street furnishings.



Initiative 2

Connect the Saint Paul and Minneapolis Grand Rounds parkways together

Since the 1880’s a true Grand Round Parkway System has been envisioned for the Twin Cities. We will connect the two parkway systems to create the finest and largest urban scenic byway system in the United States.



Initiative 3

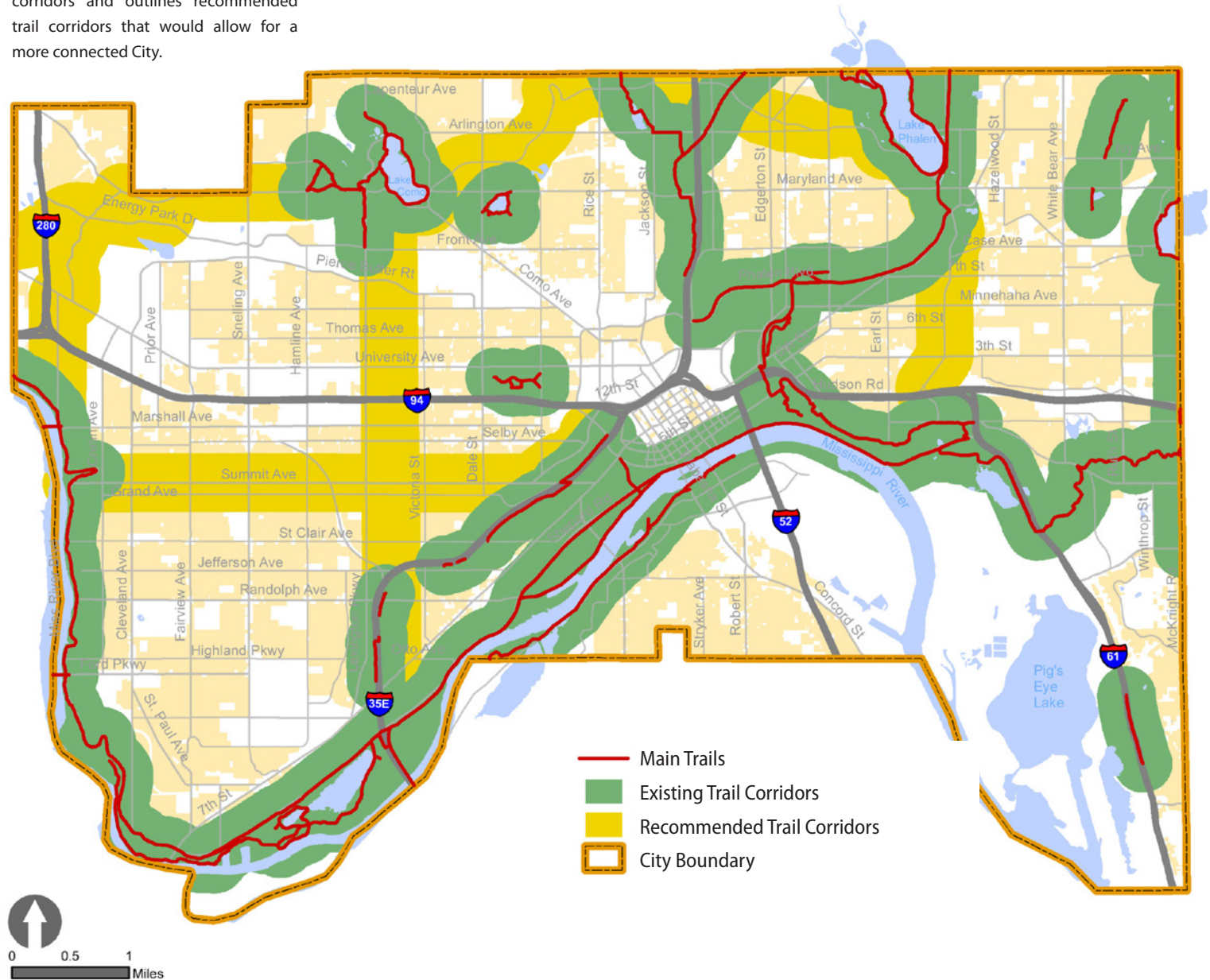
Locate a new high quality park and recreation space/facility near the proposed Central Corridor LRT line

We will create a facility that would capitalize on enhanced mobility in this area, fulfill a service need, and/or replace multiple underperforming facilities.

Existing and Recommended Trail Corridors

Figure 4.7

This map illustrates the existing trail corridors and outlines recommended trail corridors that would allow for a more connected City.



- Printed park and trail system maps

- PARKCARDS

- On-site kiosks

- Development and implementation of a signage and way finding master plan

- Enhancement of web tools.

CASE STUDY East West Circulators



The questions kept coming regarding the new Eastside Children's Summer Program: 'How will children get to our program?' and, 'How will we reach children in our extended neighborhood who need our services?'

The solution to these questions was the East Side Circulator, a bus that circulates on a regular schedule and route, which all young people and families can ride. The Circulator shifts the focus from organization or program-specific transportation to a vision of holistic transportation throughout a neighborhood. Students are connected to a myriad of neighborhood learning opportunities at

the library, recreation centers, schools, parks, and other places throughout the neighborhood during non-school time. Through the Circulator, young people know their neighborhood better and have easy transportation in order to be positively engaged during non-school hours.

A common question that parents then asked when registering their child was 'Do you provide transportation?' The parent's faces light up when they were told 'As a matter of fact, yes!' Each family who registered was given a flyer with the Circulator bus routes. Since the addition of free and safe transportation in 2007, the number of young people registered in the Eastside Summer program doubled. Summer of 2006 there were 50 young people registered and summer of 2007 there were 107 registrants.

The East Side Circulator was modeled after the successful West Side Circulator, which has been an integral piece of infrastructure for the West Side Neighborhood Learning Community for over five years. Mayor Chris Coleman's



Initiative 4 Enhance transit access to parks and recreation

We will enhance transit access to regional parks, community parks, and active lifestyle centers by influencing Metro Transit route decisions; and by establishing other options as appropriate, such as local circulators, ride sharing, and park and rides.



Initiative 5 Expand awareness of recreation opportunities

We will expand awareness of recreation opportunities through the use of printed park and trail system maps, PARKCARDS, and on-site kiosks; development and implementation of a signage and way finding master plan; and continued enhancement of web tools.

Second Shift Initiative moved forward to replicate the West Side Circulator model to the East Side of Saint Paul – specifically, Dayton’s Bluff and Payne Phalen neighborhoods.

This collaborative approach to neighborhood transportation (both on the West Side and on the East Side) represents a truly unique approach to youth engagement at the neighborhood level. It comes from neighborhood-wide collaboration focusing on what is best for all youth and children in the neighborhood instead of just those at one agency or location. In addition, the collaboration is place-based. The Circulator emphasizes young people learning throughout the neighborhood, encouraging them to develop more relationships in their neighborhood and giving them a stronger context for learning.

The Circulator bus acts as both a physical and metaphorical connector of learning opportunities connecting people, neighborhoods, communities, and the city.



Initiative 6 **Continue the use of mobile recreation**

We will come to you, not just expect you to come to us. Mobile recreation is a flexible means of providing more recreation services where and when they are needed. We will use mobile recreation to fill park or recreation service gaps, enhance events, and provide unique recreation opportunities to neighborhood and community parks.



Initiative 7 **Become the trusted “go to” recreation clearinghouse**

Communicating and marketing all recreation choices (no matter who is the provider) fosters a healthy community. Efforts like “Virtual One Stop Shop” online registration and the Second Shift Youth Initiative enhance information and access to recreation city-wide. We will facilitate the dissemination of information to residents about all recreation options -- city, other public, and private.



Initiative 8 **Undertake a parkway study**

Parkway designations vary widely and consistent design, maintenance, and use are lacking. We will undertake a comprehensive parkway study to define parkway character, features, and amenities, in order to clarify parkway designations and assign improvement responsibilities and resources.

We will come to you, not just expect you to come to us.





5. USING THE VISION PLAN

tool kit

The Vision Plan combined with the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan (Parks and other appropriate chapters) are intended to guide big picture decision making by City officials, staff, partners and the public. How will staff in the Parks and Recreation department and City officials take the Vision Plan, which is general in its scope and translate it into rational and defensible choices about making changes within the system? How will the City know when to say “yes” to a new project, idea, or approach and when to say “no”? This toolkit will help the department when making tough choices. It is intended to act as a guide to evaluating new projects and initiatives and helping with decision making system-wide and on a case by case basis. The Tool Kit contains five tools:

- Decisions Principles Checklist
- Initiatives Matrix
- Asset Management Tools
- Users Guide
- Measuring Progress

Lastly, a user’s guide offers guidance about integration of the Vision into system plans, annual plans, budgets, and day to day operations, as well as methods to measure progress.

DECISION PRINCIPLES CHECKLIST

The Decisions Principles Checklist is a set of critical questions based on the core values of the Vision Plan. Decisions regarding allocation of resources, facility or program changes, etc. should be measured against the principles contained in the checklist. When faced with a new initiative or project all the questions should be asked. Simply because a certain contemplated action meets many or few should not be the sole grounds for acceptance or rejection, but it should be a significant factor in the decision process. The Decision Principles tool can be particularly effective when comparing several competing actions.

DECISION PRINCIPLES

The following questions are a test of any new action to determine if the action supports Parks and Recreation's mission and vision. Not every action will receive a "check" for every question, but each question should be asked during the evaluation process. If an action does not receive a "check," critical questions need to be asked about how the project can be adapted to meet a decision principle; and, if it cannot be adapted, whether the action meets enough other decision principles to justify moving forward.



Does the action further Parks and Recreation's role as the champion of health and wellness?

☐


Will the action be a catalyst for private sector investment?

☐


Does the action exemplify environmental leadership?

☐


Does the action creatively respond to changing needs?

☐


Does the action reflect different needs for different neighborhoods?

☐


Have life cycle and operational costs been adequately addressed?

☐


Is the action economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable in both the short and long terms?

☐


Does the action support quality over quantity?

☐


Does that action help connect people, parks, trails and open spaces?

☐


Have all facility and partnership options been evaluated before deciding to add infrastructure?

☐


Does the action support a City-wide system of parks and recreational facilities?







☐


Will the action build community awareness, advocacy and passion for parks and recreation?

☐

INITIATIVES MATRIX

The vision for the Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Plan will be achieved by implementing the initiatives presented in this plan. Most of the initiatives achieve more than one of the 6 goals embedded in the vision. Here all the initiatives, along with the multiple goals they achieve are presented in one place, demonstrating their interdependence.

							
	Initiative	Active Lifestyles	Vibrant Places	A Vital Environment	Respond Creatively to Change	Innovates with Every Decision	Connect the Entire City
We will Promote Active Lifestyles							
	1. Ensure convenient and equitable access to parks and recreation facilities by : A) having publicly accessible park or outdoor recreation space within ½ mile of all residents; B) having publicly accessible indoor recreation within one mile of all residents.	●	●				●
	2. Demonstrate and encourage healthy choices	●					
	3. Complete the trail and bikeway system	●					●
	4. Seek to develop shared use facilities as a first option when contemplating new or replacement of indoor recreation facilities	●	●				
	5. Improve public safety in our parks	●	●				
We will Create Vibrant Places							
	1. Require that the siting, design and funding of parks, open space and trails be an integral feature of major redevelopment projects.	●	●			●	●
	2. Design for appropriate community gathering or festival opportunities		●		●		
	3. Enhance food experiences		●		●	●	
	4. Facilitate wireless communication networks		●		●	●	●
	5. Ensure attractive, functional, and engaging four season public spaces	●	●				
	6. Analyze the cost-benefit of festivals and events and identify methods to make them fiscally sustainable		●			●	
	7. Implement the National Great River Park Plan	●	●	●	●		



	Initiative	Active Lifestyles	Vibrant Places	A Vital Environment	Respond Creatively to Change	Innovates with Every Decision	Connect the Entire City
We will Promote a Vital Environment							
	1. Conduct a Natural Resource Inventory		●	●	●		
	2. Expand the environmental education program			●	●	●	
	3. Provide interpretive signage		●	●	●		
	4. Creatively consider storm water impacts and benefits		●	●	●		
	5. Update and implement the Street and Park Tree Master Plan		●	●	●		
	6. Model environmental leadership			●	●		
We Will Respond Creatively to Change							
	1. Regularly gather customer and resident feedback on needs, satisfaction and trends		●		●		
	2. Establish a parks foundation				●	●	
	3. Create access to a broad range of aquatic experiences	●	●		●		
	4. Meet changing recreation need by: A) creating active lifestyle centers; B) increasing opportunities for after school programs; C) providing 4-6 off-leash dog areas; D) providing access to high quality full size dedicated use turf sport fields (soccer, Lacrosse, rugby, etc.) within every quadrant; E) providing a community garden within one mile of every household; F) adding senior fitness programs in every quadrant; G) offering culturally specific recreation programs on a community level; H) providing extreme sport opportunities, such as a skate park, BMX bike track, mountain bike trail, or others, in each quadrant of the city.	●	●		●	●	



	Initiative	Active Lifestyles	Vibrant Places	A Vital Environment	Respond Creatively to Change	Innovates with Every Decision	Connect the Entire City
We Will Innovate with Every Decision							
	1. Enhance sustainability by: A) designing and implementing a system-wide sustainability evaluation process; B) creating a materials research report.			●		●	
	2. Renovate and upgrade some low an moderate quality existing facilities	●	●		●	●	
	3. Make park and recreation facility and improvement decision based on a system-wide asset management program by: A) creating a comprehensive asset management program; B) selecting priority facility improvements for bond funding based on the asset management program; C) preparing a master plan and capital improvement plan for each park.		●		●	●	
	4. Reprogram some low and moderate quality existing facilities	●	●		●	●	
	5. Enhance the quality of athletic fields	●			●	●	
	6. Establish and publicize a facility replacement time line				●	●	
	7. Think about the activity first, and then consider all possible facility and delivery options				●	●	
	8. Create a comprehensive volunteer program					●	



	Initiative	Active Lifestyles	Vibrant Places	A Vital Environment	Respond Creatively to Change	Innovates with Every Decision	Connect the Entire City
We Will Connect the Entire City							
	1. Build the Grand Rounds Parkway	●	●				●
	2. Connect the Saint Paul and Minneapolis Grand Rounds parkways together	●				●	●
	3. Locate a new high quality park and recreation space/facility near the proposed Central Corridor LRT line	●	●		●		●
	4. Enhance transit access to regional parks, community parks, and active lifestyle centers			●	●		●
	5. Expand awareness of recreation opportunities	●	●		●		●
	6. Use mobile recreation to fill park or recreation program service gaps, enhance events, and to provide unique recreation to neighborhood and community parks	●				●	●
	7. Become the trusted “go to” recreation clearinghouse	●				●	●
	8. Implement a parkway study		●				●

ASSET MANAGEMENT TOOLS

The Vision for Saint Paul Parks and Recreation includes initiatives to revitalize and improve the efficiency, quality and sustainability of the Saint Park Parks and Recreation system. A focus of the Vision initiatives is to creatively revitalize and reposition existing park physical assets (park buildings, fields, courts, recreation centers, etc.) to meet changing needs, improve quality and to make the park system more fiscally sustainable. The creation of an asset management program is a key step of this initiative. The asset management program is to evaluate the physical recreation assets and determine priorities for improvement, revitalization and repositioning based on system-wide needs. The asset management program should be a living document and process which is kept up to date regularly as the quality of physical park assets changes and needs evolve. The Park Classifications, Activity Delivery Guidelines, and the Recreation Facility Service Standards are three tools that will help guide preparation of the asset management program.

- The Park Classifications
- Activity Delivery Guidelines
- Recreation Facility Service Standards

OTHER RESOURCES

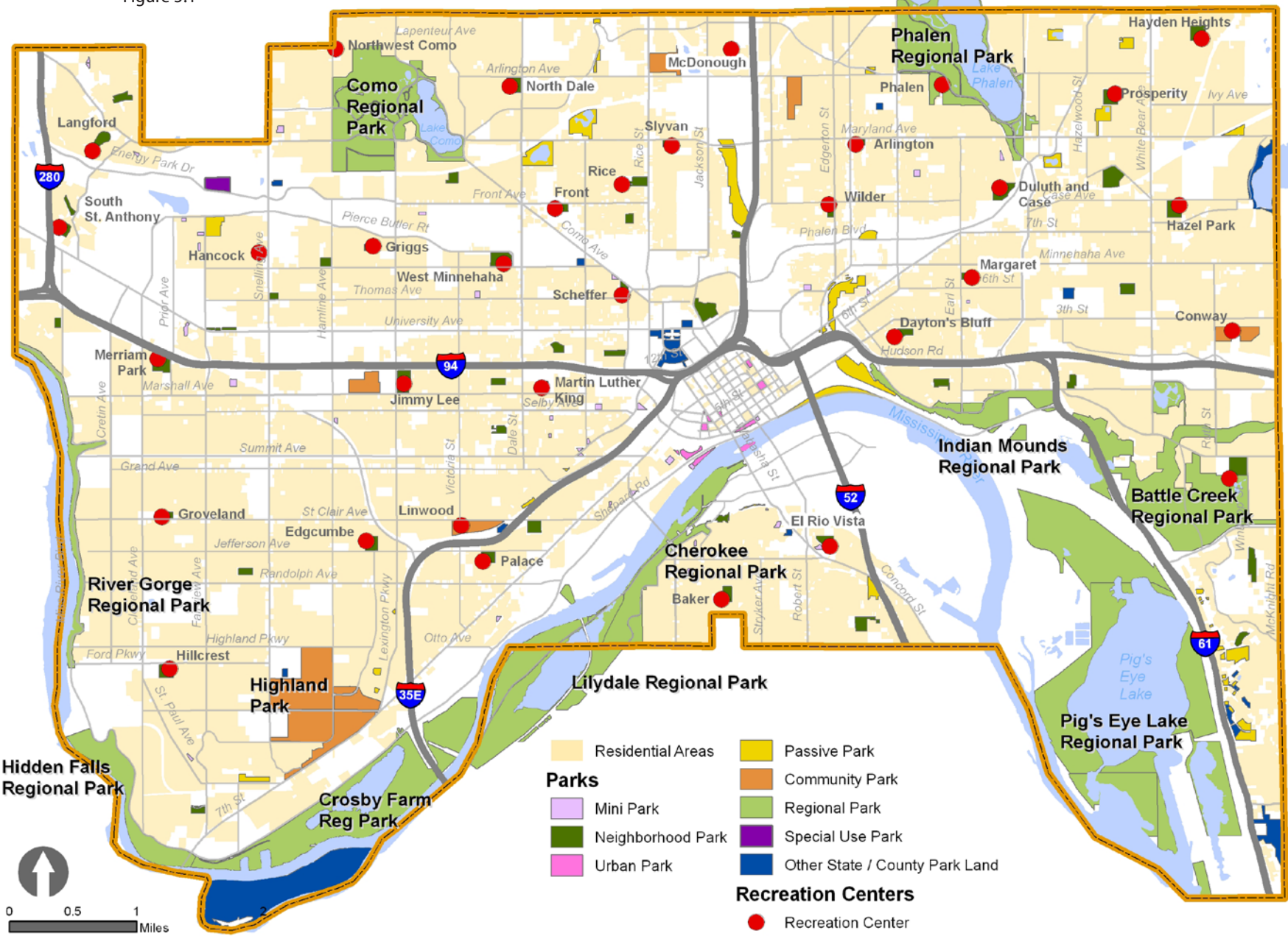
Delivering the Best Experiences

More and more people are seeking high quality experiences. One resource that Saint Paul Parks and Recreation can consult is The Experience Economy by Pine and Gilmore, 1999. The authors recommend building value and customer satisfaction through the use of experiences, focusing on the “ing” part of the equation - i.e. picnic-ing, socializ-ing, bik-ing rather than just the facility. They suggest direct contact with customers to define the components of the desired experience and then using that information to define what is needed to deliver a quality experience. They suggest thinking about staging and experience as opposed to simply delivering a service. Pine and Gilmore use the experience and value analogy of coffee which can also be applied to Park and Recreation services and experiences:

Hierarchy of Value	Coffee	Parks and Recreation
A Commodity	Bulk beans	Acquire park space
A Good	Roasted and ground	Provide a softball field
A Service	Brewed cup at a diner	Schedule a tournament
An Experience	Cappuccino at a coffee shop	Create a unique event, such as a Sports Sampler, for all ages and abilities

Park Classification Map

Figure 5.1



Park and Recreation Classifications

The park classifications define and clarify the intended use of each park type and indoor recreation facilities; and clarify the area served, the size, and ideal sites. This table is particularly useful when planning for new parks within the community or when contemplating park needs for major redevelopment projects. Use of these Classifications will help guide facility and use plans and the asset management program.

Table 5.1

Park Classification	Use	Service Area	Size	Site/Acres
Mini Park	Provides opportunities for passive recreation close to home. May include overlooks, open lawn, tot lots, tennis courts, basketball courts, or open space	1/4 mile	Less than 2 acres	Easily accessible to neighborhood residents. Safe walking and/or biking access
Neighborhood Park	Provides for recreation close to home. Developed primarily for active recreation such as field games, court games, play equipment, and skating.	1/2 mile radius, free of major barriers such as major highways	2-15 acres	Easily accessible to neighborhood residents. Safe walking and biking access.
Recreation Center	Provides indoor recreation and meeting room space at the community level. May offer specialized or general recreation at hours to fit local programming needs and resources.	1-mile free of major barriers such as major highways, 1/2 mile within areas of low mobility	NA	Easily accessible to the community via multiple modes of travel i.e. auto, transit, bike or walk.
Active Lifestyle Center	Provides a wide range of indoor recreation and community opportunities such as gyms, fitness, walking/running, meeting rooms, etc. Likely to include other shared uses such as libraries, community services, coffee shops, etc. where feasible.	2 mile service area	NA	Located at hubs of community activity. Accessible via multiple modes of travel i.e. auto, transit, bike or walk.
Passive Park	Open or natural areas with limited recreational development, primarily devoted to picnicking or strolling. May include paths, mature trees, nature areas, gardens, and lawn areas.	Community - wide according to natural resource patterns	Varies	Encompasses existing natural features such rivers, creeks, and ponds as well as wooded areas.

Table 5.1
Continued

Park Classification	Use	Service Area	Size	Site/Acres
Community Park	Facilities that serve the entire community. May include: large picnic grounds, programmed sport complexes; golf course, aquatics facilities, etc.	1-2 mile service radius or more	15+ acres	Site should be suited for community use, be easily accessible to the population it is intended to serve. Located near high traffic areas such as schools and major thoroughfares.
Special Use Park	Single-use areas such as sports stadiums.	Community - wide	Varies	Site specific Midway Stadium
Urban Park	Parks that provide for recreation/ gathering space within the downtown area offering a primary social, rather than recreational, experience. May include plazas, band shells, and lawn areas	¼ mile	Varies	Within Downtown Saint Paul Area
Regional Park	Parks that are designated part of the Regional Park System. Uses vary widely, but focus is on outdoor and natural resource based recreation and learning.	Region-wide	Varies	Como, Phalen, Hidden Falls- Crosby Farm, Lilydale-Harriet Island, Mississippi Gorge, Battle Creek -Indian Mounds (Ramsey County)
Other Property	Unprogrammed open space areas that have little recreational value such as traffic circles and medians Maintenance facilities are also included in this category.	NA	Varies	Traffic circles and mediana
Parkways	Corridors combining linear recreation and transportation.	NA	Varies	Provide a scenic experience for driving, biking, walking and other similar linear recreation uses.

Guidelines for Delivery of Park and Recreation Activities

The following guidelines provide direction regarding the public and geographic access to recreation activities within the City of Saint Paul. The delivery levels range from city scale to neighborhood scale and define the expectations for the quantity and general location of a particular facility. For example, golf and indoor ice arenas are specialized facilities that are used by residents from across the City, while children's play equipment and open grass play space should be accessible at a neighborhood level.

The first consideration should always be the need, appropriateness, and current availability. The infrastructure (field, court, path, etc.) needed for the activity to occur is the second consideration. The physical facilities and programs needed for the activity may be best delivered, modified, or created by the City; or by other service providers alone or in partnership with the City. To be feasible over time, the infrastructure and on-going operational costs for an activity must be delivered at a sustainable rate.

Table 5.2

Delivery Level	Recreation Focus	Facility Examples	Places	Trails/Bikeways	Service Area
Within the City	Family, adult and group recreation.	Golf courses, zoos, indoor ice arenas, stadiums, natural areas, lake and river accesses.	Regional Parks and Special Use Parks, Downtown Urban Parks	The Grand Rounds, regional trails and city-wide on-street bikeways. Large loop routes.	City-wide and the Region
Within a park service quadrant (See Figure 4.4)	Family, adult and group recreation.	Dedicated athletic fields, aquatics, group picnic shelters, community gathering space, off-leash dog areas, outdoor refrigerated ice skating, natural areas, and activities which are new or emerging and need to be tested before further integration into the park system.	Community Parks, Passive Parks, and Schools	Citywide trails and regional trails. Portions of the Grand Rounds. Links to adjacent jurisdictions' trails and bikeways. Loop trail and bikeway routes.	Within a quadrant of the City.
Within a community (groups of 2-3 neighborhoods)	Activities appeal to a wide range of recreation interests, ages and abilities.	Organized outdoor athletic facilities (ball fields, turf fields), tennis courts, shared use fields, outdoor general skating rinks, indoor recreation facilities, and community use facilities.	Community Parks, Schools, Recreation Centers, and Active Lifestyle Centers	Local off-street trail links to city- wide and regional trails. Sidewalks and On-street bikeways connecting residential areas to parks and recreation centers	1-2 mile radius, generally encompassing 2-3 neighborhoods. ½ mile radius for low mobility areas.
Within a neighborhood	Children and youth activities.	Children's play equipment, informal turf play space, and community gardens.	Neighborhood Parks and Mini Parks. Urban Parks within downtown.	Shared trails/walks within parks. Sidewalks and bike lanes connecting residential areas to parks	Walkable distance, not more than ½ mile.
Mobile Recreation	Flexible and mobile delivery of recreation services.	City-wide. Going where services are needed, parks, schools, homeless shelters, etc.			

Recreation Facility Service Standards

The Standards identify a minimum level of service for recreation facilities, such as ball fields, courts, etc. to assure convenient access to recreation. The Standards list the desired minimum number of facilities, the existing number, and note any excess or deficiencies.

Recommended numbers of high quality and dedicated-use sports fields are included. Recreation trends vary and flexibility is needed to respond to changing needs and new activities/uses. Considerations should be given to public access to other non-city facilities when infrastructure decisions are made. Surplus or deficit does not automatically mean the need to add or remove facilities. However, it does indicate the potential to re-position the facility mix within the park

system to better meet needs and to increase sustainability and operating costs. Numbers alone do not tell the whole story as facility usability is affected by quality, size, access, durability, etc. The guidelines are intended to give the City flexibility in replacing unused or poor quality facilities with facilities for the popular activities at any given time.

Table 5.3

Facility	Minimum Service Areas	Location	Minimum Number Needed (assumes most efficient distribution)	Current Number of Facilities (Level of Service)	Excess or Deficits	Facility Supply Notes
Field/Court Sports						
Adult Baseball Youth Baseball	1-2 mile service radius for youth and for 1-2 mile service radius adult + groups of fields for tournament use	Full size lighted fields part of community complex. Best with 4 or more fields in one location. Dedicated field use allows higher quality turf and field conditions.	13 adult 13 youth Min. 8 dedicated full size fields and 8 dedicated youth fields	35	+9	An excess number of baseball fields indicate the potential to reposition marginal and little used baseball fields to turf sport fields (soccer, LaCrosse, field hockey). Couple that with improvements to existing fields to create higher quality baseball dedicated fields.
Softball /Little League	½ - 1 mile service radius youth + 1 mile radius adults Best when located in groups of 2 or more. Plus groups of 4 in each quadrant.	Neighborhood and community parks.	40 youth 25 adult 91 total min. Min. 16 full size dedicated and lighted fields.	119	+28	An excess number of softball fields indicate the potential to reposition marginal and little used fields to turf sport fields (soccer, LaCrosse, field hockey). Work to enhance the quality of dedicated fields. Evaluate the ability to light additional fields to extend play ability.
Field Sports: Field Hockey Lacrosse Soccer (full size) Football Youth Soccer (smaller)	1 mile service radius Soccer with groups of four or more fields in each quadrant, plus other multi-use turf field areas ½ -1 mile service radius	Increasing popularity of turf field sports. Neighborhood and community parks. Youth soccer on smaller fields adjacent to schools or in neighborhood parks	40 youth 25 full size soccer 25 full size other turf fields Min. 28 dedicated full size lighted fields.	Soccer : 47 fields total Approx 29 youth Approx 18 full size Football: 24 Many football/ soccer fields are the same space now.	- 8 full size - 11 youth	There is a need for additional turf sports fields. Focus on creating high quality full sized fields, which can withstand more frequent use and can be split into two youth fields as needed. Opportunities exist to reconfigure marginal and lesser used ball fields into turf sports fields.

Table 5.3 Continued

Facility	Minimum Service Areas	Location	Minimum Number Needed (assumes most efficient distribution)	Current Number of Facilities (Level of Service)	Excess or Deficits	Facility Supply Notes
Basketball	Full Court 1 mile Half court 1 mile	Full court in regional, community, or larger, multi purpose neighborhood parks Half-court in neighborhood and mini parks	25 full court 25 half court	21 full court 19 half court	-4 -6	School courts may make up for City court shortfall.
Tennis	1 mile service radius.	Best in batteries of 2 or more, with two concentrations of 4 or more courts in each quadrant. Located in neighborhood / community park or adjacent to school site.	25 locations with 2 or more courts 66 courts at 25 sites	101	+31	Excess of courts. Do not automatically replace all courts as they wear out. Evaluate use and access to other courts such as at school sites. Consider reusing tennis courts for other sports such as soccer, volleyball, basketball, off-leash dog area, skate boarding, takraw, etc. Concentrate on creating groups of high quality lighted courts.
Sand Volleyball	1 location per park service quadrant	Best in batteries of 2-3 in regional, community or in larger multi purpose neighborhood parks. Individual courts can also be located adjacent to picnic shelters in community picnic grounds	4 locations with two or more courts	2	-6	Add sand courts near lakes and picnic shelters.
Other Facilities						
Aquatic Center	1 per park service quadrant	Part of a regional /community park complex or special use facility. Como needs renovation. Add splash pad(s).	4	3 pools 1 Swimming Beach		Renovate and add to create 4 distinct high quality facilities, one in each quadrant of the City.
Adventure sport facility such as Skate Park BMX course	1 per park service quadrant	Part of a regional /community park complex, large neighborhood park or special use facility	4	2	-2	Demand is increasing for these unique activities. Add alternative sports facilities to meet demand. Distribute across the City and consider partnering with users groups, schools, etc for development and operation.
Playgrounds	Half mile	Typically in mini and neighborhood parks School playgrounds provide additional public recreation	55	78	+23	Do not automatically replace all playgrounds as equipment wears out. Evaluate use and access to other play equipment such as at school sites. Consider creating landmark play areas in each quadrant with unique themed facilities and expansive play experiences.
Off –Leash Dog Area	1 per park service quadrant	Part of a regional /community park complex, larger neighborhood park or special use facility. Growing in popularity.	4	1 City-Wide	-3	Popular facilities as more households now have dogs than children. Develop more OLDA's as demand expresses itself. Size can vary from small to large. Distribute evenly across the City.

Table 5.3 Continued

Facility	Minimum Service Areas	Location	Minimum Number Needed (assumes most efficient distribution)	Current Number of Facilities (Level of Service)	Excess or Deficits	Facility Supply Notes
Indoor Facilities						
Active Lifestyle Center	2 mile	Highest quality indoor recreation facilities offering a wide range of activities. Centrally located to serve several neighborhoods. Located along primary transit lines. Safe bike / walking routes connecting to residential areas.	9	1 Jimmy Lee Center	-8	It is anticipated that existing recreation centers in key locations would be upgraded or replaced to meet these needs
Recreation Center	1 mile, Half mile or other provisions in low mobility areas	Centrally located to serve more than one neighborhood. Located near major roads for automobile access. Located along primary transit lines. Safe bike / walking routes connecting to residential areas. Active Lifestyle centers may serve as recreation centers for residents within 1 mile.	16	33	+6	6 recreation centers are located within the service area of other existing rec. centers. These could be repositioned to become specialized use centers or closed if use does not justify continued operation and other facilities are within the service area
Specialized Use Center	NA	Recreation facility that are owned by the City and operated by another organization. These centers provide specialized recreation based on the role and focus of the operating entity.	As demand warrants	NA	NA	Develop partner operators as City facilities become available for repositioning
Ice Hockey						
Indoor Arena	City – Wide	Centrally located to serve the entire City. Consider convenient vehicle and transit access.	As demand warrants	7	Operated by Ramsey County	
Dedicated Outdoor Ice Hockey Rinks (Refrigerated ice or paved surface)	1 per park service quadrant	Centrally located to serve a park service Located near major roads for automobile access. Located along primary transit lines. Safe bike / walking routes connecting to residential areas. Lighted facility. Best as part of multipurpose neighborhood or community park.	4	19 (in 14 locations)	-1	Evaluate the performance of the new (2007) outdoor refrigerated rinks as part of the City-wide ice skating system.
Ice Hockey – Shared Use Rinks (uses shared with turf athletic fields in summer)	1-2 mile; 3 min per service area quadrant	Lighted facility. Best as part of multipurpose neighborhood park.	13		+2	Evaluate outdoor shared use rinks after refrigerated rinks have been in operation to determine needs or excess of shared use rinks. Total of 17 rinks can meet min. service area.
Free Skating						
Destination Free Skating	1 per park service area quadrant	High quality open skating area with unique features (size, shape, amenities, etc. Centrally located to serve a quadrant of the city. Located near major roads for automobile access. Located along primary transit lines. Lighted facility. Best as part of multipurpose neighborhood or community park.	4	0	-4	The City lacks destination, high quality open skating rinks. Consider a free skating (non-hockey) rink or skate trail next to a sledding hill to create a winter sport complex.
Free Skating	1-2 mile service radius	Typically associated with outdoor hockey rink. Best as part of multipurpose neighborhood park.	13	24	+7 Min. number of rinks is 17	Evaluate outdoor shared use free skating rinks after refrigerated rinks have been in operation to determine needs or excess of shared use rinks. Total of 17 rinks can meet min. service area.

USER'S GUIDE

Several primary processes will help ensure that the work of City officials, staff, partners and the public will support the Park and Recreation Vision.

Capital Improvement Plans

The systematic planning and budgeting for capital improvements is a key function of government. Logical and efficient capital planning is based on a shared vision and a common understanding of needs and priorities. The Vision Plan establishes the direction for Saint Paul Parks and Recreation. The Asset Management Program will be the tool to establish specific system-wide needs and priorities for improvements. In practice, the Vision Plan and the asset management program should be used annually to prepare a five year capital improvement plan (CIP) as a blueprint for achieving the vision, goals, and initiatives of the organization. The five year CIP combined with staff expertise and community input should form the basis of the annual (CIB) Capital Improvement Budget.

Annual Work Plans and Budgets

Each work group and the Department will develop annual work plans and budgets that tie to the values, goals and initiatives of the Vision Plan. The work plans should include indicators that help manage work flow and ensure that daily work corresponds to the direction set forth in the Vision Plan. These work plans should set forth specific actions/outcomes that are measurable, achievable, relevant and time specific. The annual budget will allocate spending that corresponds to the Vision Plan priorities and the annual work plans.

System Plans

The Vision Plan provides the direction for the Park System as a whole for the future and includes recommended initiatives for key actions. The Vision Plan and initiatives should be reflected in plans for the key elements which make up the park

and recreation system - Parks, Natural Resources, Trails and Bikeways, Recreation, Como Campus, Aquatics, Golf, Forestry and Communications and Marketing. System-wide Plans for these components should be prepared to guide individual efforts and to institute a systems approach to the work of the Department.

MEASURING PROGRESS

The direction set by the Vision Plan will be achieved through a set of collective and coordinated actions over time. Careful monitoring will allow City officials and staff to determine if a selected course of action is achieving the desired outcomes, will allow for correction to be made and will signal successful results. Three aspects of evaluating performance are suggested.

Community Impact

Measuring the impact of a program or project is increasingly important in a tight-funding climate and is a key to judging the effectiveness of the Vision Plan. The 2007 Community Attitude and Interest Survey offers an excellent baseline to measure Department performance over time (i.e. every five years). Use of regular on-going feedback from recreation program users and park visitors will assure that programs and facilities stay fresh and well loved. Lastly, continued use of digital media and the internet for both gathering input and providing information will assure an informed and engaged public.

Organizational Performance

A key component of the direction established by the Vision Plan is to enhance long-term fiscal sustainability. While this will not happen over night, the use of the Decision Principles will help keep economic sustainability at the fore front, when making difficult decisions about facilities, events or programs. The environmental health and physical condition of the park properties should be monitored regularly to make sure it is also progressing toward enhanced sustainability. Annual

budgets should include actions to measure the performance of efforts to make the system more sustainable in the long-term. An annual evaluation of progress toward meeting the goals and initiatives should be prepared and shared with employees, the public, stakeholders, and City officials.

Individual Performance

Employees actions move the Department and City toward achieving the goals. Employees will be evaluated, in part, on the work they do in meeting the Vision. This requires that the Department imparts an understanding of the Vision Plan and the employee's role in achieving the goals to each employee. Individual performance reviews will also allow supervisors monitor workflow and keep the annual work plans on target.

COMMUNICATIONS

Communicating the Parks and Recreation Vision to the public, stakeholders and partners in a regular and consistent manner is a crucial to success. People must understand the direction in which Parks and Recreation is heading as well as the reasons behind that vision. That knowledge and understanding will result in support and buy-in for the direction and for subsequent decisions designed to implement the Plan. For example, placing informative signage at park reconstruction or environmental management projects will help inform the public about the “What and Why” of the project and tie the project to the Vision Plan goals. The following communication tools help guide communication of the Vision.

Parkcards

PARKCARDS are a flexible means of communicating both the Vision Plan and decision making related to implementing the Plan. PARKCARDS can be created as needed, when a new major decision arises or a new facility opens. Each card includes a map of the overall park and trail system and a summary of the Vision Plan, as well as specific information relating to the decision or facility to be communicated. PARKCARDS can be used as hand outs, or can be mailed, e-mailed or posted on the web.

Online Communications

A digital version of the Vision Plan is available on-line.

Digital Presentations

A summary of the Vision Plan was prepared in PowerPoint format for use in presenting the Vision to groups, organizations and partners.

Many aspire to change the world but few realize that everyone accomplishes that goal. Each day you live you are changing something. Rather than simply changing the world, one should aspire to make a positive change with each action they commit.

-Anonymous





**On Our Way to
Making Saint Paul
The Most Livable
City in America**



Facilitating the creation of **active lifestyles,**
vibrant places and a **vital environment,**
through parks and recreation that **respond**
creatively to change, innovate with every
decision and **connect the entire City.**

MARCH 1, 2008

